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T O U R I S M



THE HIGHLAND QINGHAI LAKE

STORIES OF RETURNED OVERSEAS CHINESE

XIAMEN: A TAIWAN STRAIT CITY

DRIFTING TO KOREA ON A BAMBOO RAFT

210

ISSN 1025-577X



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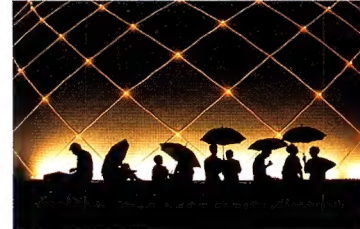
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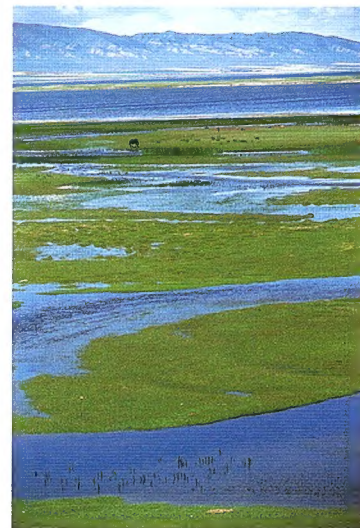


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Photo by Shi Baoxiu



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Sea-like Qinghai Lake, the largest in China, covers an area twice as large as Lake Taihu and its surface is on a plateau twice the height of Mount Taishan. In summer, the blue lake is bordered by countless yellow flowers and one can stay at a lakeside tent hotel to experience the lifestyle of herdsmen. Nearby, Chaka, a salt lake, is like a vast expanse of snow.



DISCOVERIES

Farmers on Hainan Island: Stories of Returned Overseas Chinese

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Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong

A group of overseas Chinese returned to China and settled on Hainan Island. Against all odds these farmers have tilled the land and built new homes and, now, several decades later, our reporter who just visited their farm tells their stories to you.



CHALLENGES

An Expedition to Korea on a Bamboo Raft

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Photos by Cai Changming and Wu Lianbao

Article by Cai Changming

It takes only an hour to fly from Zhoushan, in East China's coastal Zhejiang Province, to Incheon in Korea. But a group of Chinese and Koreans on board a home-made bamboo raft drifted for 24 days on the vast sea, relying only on monsoon winds and sea currents. Their experience is beyond imagination.



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A new tour programme! On board a special express train, travellers can visit historical and scenic spots along the way during the day and stay aboard the train at night. It saves time and money.

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On Inner Mongolia's huge Tumochuan Plain lies a famous stretch of water known as Hasu (Jade) Lake where luxuriant reeds grow.

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Article by Iris Wong

About half of the Korean, one of China's ethnic minority groups, live in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province. The Koreans are good singers and dancers and Korean men love to wrestle to display their strength and skill.

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Photos by Xie Guanghui and So Long Chi Article by Gloria Shang

On the coast of the Taiwan Strait, Xiamen is a beautiful tourist destination favoured by people from both sides of the strait. Designated as a special economic zone with preferential policies, Xiamen's economy is taking off and the city is becoming a modern and prosperous port city.

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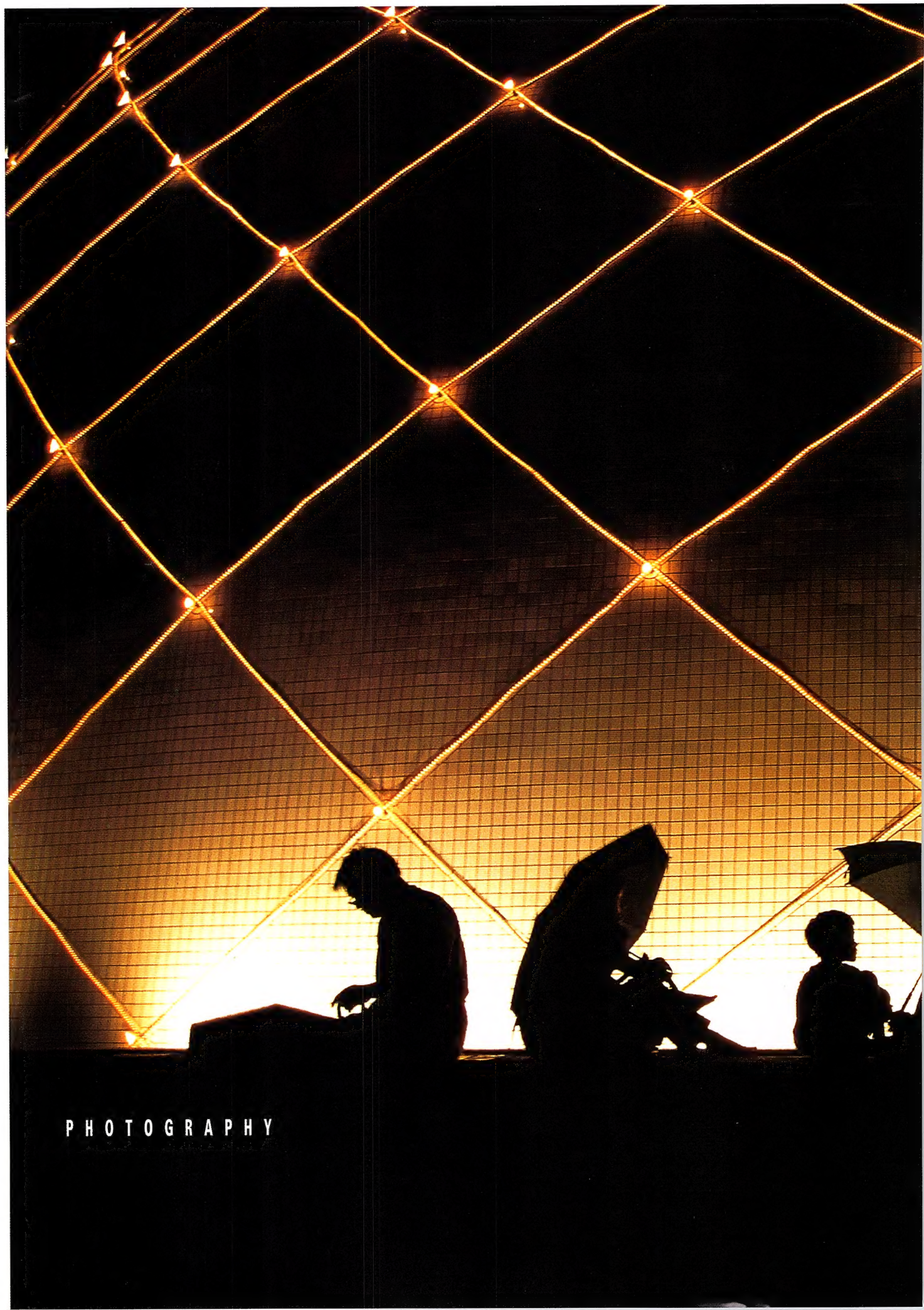
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Cover: The crystal water of Qinghai lake



PHOTOGRAPHY



Photo by Shi Baoxiu

Shadows in the Rain

The ball-like architecture of the Hong Kong Space Museum is charming at night. During festivals, the charm would be enhanced when more lights are attached onto the outside walls of the building.

However, if the building were standing alone without any trace of human beings, it would lose its fantastic spirit. This photo owes its excellence to the people holding umbrellas in the rain, and the outline effect created by the lights. Even an intelligent director might not be able to design such a perfect stage scene, but here it happens naturally. To get the right aperture, add one or two more degrees due to the bright wall of the Space Museum. You may use a cross filter if you want the lights to appear like stars.

Estimated data: 135 camera, 80-200 zoom; Shutter: 1/8 second; Aperture: 5.6; Film: Fuji RD (ISO 100) slide



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FROM THE EDITOR

THE FATE OF OVERSEAS CHINESE

Some days ago, the news from Indonesia is very unsettling — racial attacks against Chinese, riots, forest fires, earthquake, air crash and a ship in distress. The one that probably caused the most worldwide concern is the news of racial attacks, since Chinese can be found in almost every corner of the world.

In the past two centuries, innumerable Chinese left their homeland in search of better prospects overseas. The early waves of emigrants were mainly engaged in mining and railway construction, as cheap labour was then their only asset. But, after settling, some started small trades in their communities. Today, the new generation of overseas Chinese have long since integrated into the mainstream society and many of them play important roles as politicians, professionals and business people.

Yet, overseas Chinese still face discrimination and even racial violence. It is really a sad thing that even at the end of the 20th century, racial discrimination still exists and people have to flee for their lives because of their ethnicity.

Who is to blame? Racists, or the government who fails to unite all the people and administer social justice? But why have the victims been rendered to such a situation? Why should they leave their homeland since they have both talents and wealth? Should they stay or should they go home? There could be dozens of questions confronting each immigrant. Maybe, the solution will come in the future when China becomes a united, more prosperous and more powerful nation in the world. Through the stories of the returned overseas Chinese at the Xinglong Overseas Chinese Farm in Hainan we convey our greetings to Chinese in every corner of the world. We wish the best for all of them!

Photo by Huang Yanhong


DISCOVERIES

A Very Special Tour to Qundajia Lake

Qundajia Lake
Qundajia Lake



In the valleys at the foot of the Son and Moon Mountains are thousands of acres of rape flowers.



*The ocean-like Qinghai Lake is the largest lake in China.
Its surface is twice as high as Mount Taishan.
It covers an area twice as large as Lake Taihu.
In the summer, the blue lake is bordered by countless
yellow flowers.*

*As seagulls soar over the water, cormorants perch
in flocks on a solitary rock.*

*Chaka, the Salt Lake, is like a vast expanse of snow.
It is hot summer during the day, and as cold as winter at night.
One can stay at a tent hotel by the lake and
experience the lifestyle of herdsmen.*

The Sun and Moon Mountain



To reach Lake Qinghai, we had to climb over the Sun and Moon Mountain about 90 kilometres from Xining, capital of Qinghai Province. The average height of the mountain that stands between the Loess Plateau and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is 4,000 metres above sea level and the highest peak is 4,877 metres.

We were dumbfounded by the answer. People certainly have different criteria for measuring heat.

Depilated Hills

We left Xining in the early morning in a jeep and travelled westward along the Huangshui River valley. The hills near and far were all bare and yellowish brown in colour. There was not a single tree on them, except for clumps of grass here and there like freckles on a man's face. The valley itself was verdant green. There were row upon row of poplars reaching for the sky. The wheat fields here were still dark green, laden with grain and swaying in the breeze while the wheat in the Central Plains had long been harvested.

After passing through Huangyuan and coming out of the river valley, the highway began to wind its way over Mangshan Mountain, which was not bare but covered with green grass and flowers of all colours. Greyish white goats were grazing on the slopes. In the fields in the gullies were thousands of acres of rape plants, whose yellow flowers were blooming like a sea of gold. The sky was deep blue with white clouds rolling by towards the west in constantly changing shapes. Where the clouds gathered stood the majestic main peak of the Sun and Moon Mountain, its snow-capped summit glaring in the bright sunlight.

Climbing to the plateau and touring Qinghai Lake – it was a beautiful dream that had come true, and my heart was filled with gladness throughout the journey.

A direct flight took me from Hong Kong to Xi'an. The ancient city of Xi'an was extremely hot in mid-July. Even dogs gasped for breath, their tongues lolling out. The train going to Xining had no air-conditioning. As I climbed on board, I felt as if I were going into a pot for steaming food. Luckily, the train travelled at night. As it sped forward, a cool breeze wafted into the cabins, relieving the insufferable sultriness somewhat.

When I woke up the next morning, we were already in Xining. Walking out of the station, I was greeted by a cool fine drizzle. People in the street were all dressed in their rather heavy, late-autumn clothes. When we reached the hotel, we asked why it was so cool there. The lady at the front desk said, "We are having a very hot summer this year. It even reached 28 °C a couple of days ago. Were it not for the rain, people would be dying of the heat!"

Harder to Breathe

As the highway began to zigzag up the mountain, the wind coming through the windows of the jeep became increasingly colder. When I spoke, I had to catch my breath several times to complete an ordinary sentence. Even the jeep was straining itself as it rattled up the slopes. The driver said that the jeep was just like a man who had difficulties in catching his breath for lack of oxygen at the high altitude.

When we reached the summit, we saw Tibetan village houses, which were low adobe buildings surrounded by low walls without any decoration. Stuck on the walls were round patties of yak dung looking like chess pieces and filling the air with their smell. The yak dung is used as fuel for cooking and heating. These buildings were the herdsman's summer houses on the mountain's grazing grounds. When autumn came, they would drive their herds down the mountain.

Feeling Like a Sick, Old Man

When we eventually reached the pass on the Sun and Moon Mountain, the east wind had subsided and a westerly wind began to blow, sending patches of white clouds fleeting through the pass. A fierce wind wailed and shrilled through the edges of the jeep's windows. When I opened the jeep door with some effort, I was assailed by a piercingly cold wind, which turned my jacket into an unfurled sail and blew my sun hat off my head in no time. I turned round to look for the hat and found that it was rolling like a toy pinwheel up the slope. I dashed up the slope and tried to catch up with it, but long before I could do so, I found myself gasping for breath like a sick, old man. I had forgotten that we were on a high mountain 3,700 metres above sea level. We then headed for the ridge of the mountain to see the Sun and Moon Pavilion built in memory of Princess Wencheng of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) who married Songtsan Gambo, the ruler of Tibet, and passed here en route to her new home. The pavilion was located no more than 20 metres from where we were, but it took us 10 minutes to get there because we had to stop and catch our breath every few steps.

The Cold West Wind

The wind was even more fierce on the ridge. The scriptural pennants for worshipping heaven erected by the Tibetans were flapping and crackling noisily in the west wind. It was July, but the wind on the plateau was bitter cold and pierced through my woollen sweater and pants as if I had nothing on. It looked as if snow might fall at any time. My teeth began to chatter in the cold. Down the western slope was a vast expanse of grassland veiled in mist. Unlike the landscape behind me, there was no sign of villages or farms.

It was said that when Princess Wencheng was travelling into Tibet, she shed tears at the Sun and Moon Mountain and did not want to proceed because of the harsh conditions.

1. These two pavilions at the Sun and Moon Mountain Pass were built in memory of Princess Wencheng.
2. Tibetan Buddhist scriptural pennants flapping in the cold wind (by Shi Jun)
3. Fresh mushrooms are sold at the roadside.
4. This fragrant mushroom is larger than a palm.
5. To the west of the Sun and Moon Mountain Pass is a vast expanse of grassland.

◁ Mushrooms of the Grassland ▷



After climbing over the ridge of the Sun and Moon Mountain, we found that the slope had become much less steep. The rain had just stopped, and the gently undulating grassland was a vast expanse of green. When the jeep made a turn around a hill, we saw a group of men and women shouting and beckoning to

us. We pulled up and found they were peddlers of mushrooms. Placed on the ground in front of them were basins of mushrooms, among them fragrant mushrooms, floral mushrooms and straw mushrooms of generous sizes. The price was 10 yuan for a basinful of fragrant and floral mushrooms and from 5 to 7 yuan for a basinful of straw mushrooms, depending on the quality. I asked them if the mushrooms were cultivated. They all laughed, saying, "Who will spend time cultivating them when the grassland is right here? After rain, mushrooms are everywhere on the grassland. Anyone who cares to take a walk, can pick a basketful within 100 metres." I found that the quality of the mushrooms was excellent and paid 10 yuan for a basinful before riding on. The grassland on both sides of the road was dotted with mushroom pickers far and near. There were even young lamas dressed in bright red cassocks among them.





The Daotang (Backward Flowing) River originates from the Sun and Moon Mountain, and flows from east to west into Qinghai Lake. Legends about Princess Wencheng give a mystic touch to this clear, winding small river.

The mouth of the Backward Flowing River where it discharges into the lake is an ideal place for the birth and growth of little naked carp.



The Backward Flowing River

It is said to be formed by the princess's tears! The river was given the name Backward Flowing because most Chinese rivers flow eastward.

We drove downhill and headed straight for Qinghai Lake. On the way we passed a small town named Backward Flowing River, where the small river of the same name runs

by. From there, we drove 20 kilometres to the west and then turned south, following a byroad to finish the last six kilometres before we reached the Qinghai Lake.

On its upper reaches, the Backward Flowing River is an insignificant stream not much more than two metres wide that meanders through the grassland. But it begins to widen downstream. When it joins the big lake, the river had become an exultant body of water. The wider places looked like lakes and even the narrower places were more than 10 metres wide.

There were innumerable small fish among the waterweeds in the transparent water. Along both banks was knee-high grass. The spot where the river discharged into the lake presented a magnificent view. On the narrow strips of land formed by the winding river course horses and yaks were grazing. In the distance was the ocean-like, deep blue Qinghai Lake that extended as far as the horizon.

Like Floating on a Small Boat

The lake into which the Backward Flowing River flows is actually a small lake named Erhai on



the southeastern side of Qinghai Lake. Erhai was originally part of the great lake. As the water level fell drastically in recent years, a natural long dyke emerged from the water, cutting off part of the water to form a separate, long and narrow small lake.

Lake Erhai is attractive because it is quiet and natural. As it is far away from the Qinghai-Tibet Highway, the place is uninhabited and untouched by the plough. We stayed there for a whole half day, strolling along the bank of the Backward Flowing River and watching small fish swimming in the water, horses and yaks grazing leisurely on the grass and egrets and seagulls flying low near the water hunting for food. When we were tired, we stretched out on the carpet-like grass. Gazing at the drifting clouds, I felt as if I were floating on a small boat.

Sensing the attraction of Erhai, the local Tibetan people have built a hotel of tents on open ground by the lake. The white tents decorated with black designs stood in brilliant contrast to the blue lake and green grass. People staying in the hotel of tents can eat Tibetan cakes, drink milk tea and engage in a variety of amusements, including horse riding, shooting arrows and boating on the lake.

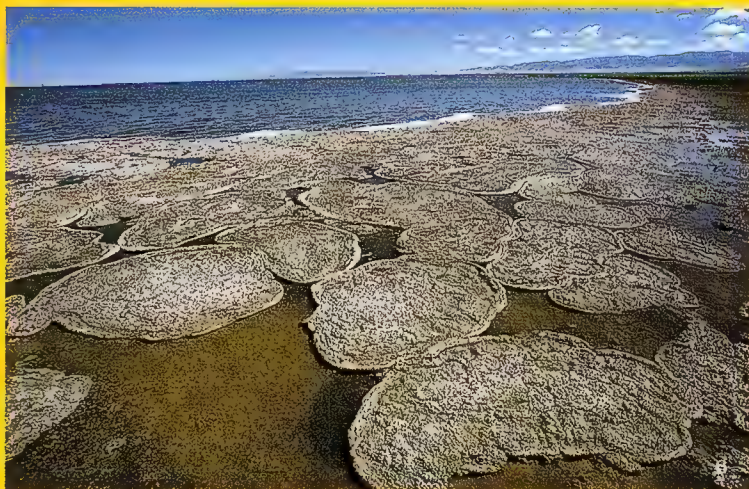
If we did not have to catch up with our schedule, I very much wanted to stay for the night in one of the tents.

We were told that if we proceeded further south along the lake shore, we would reach another body of water known as Xiaobei (Little Northern) Lake. This lake is surrounded on three sides by sand dunes. As reeds thrive at the edge of the lake, there are more water birds there. We started to drive towards the lake in high spirits. But before we had covered half of the distance, we found that the road had been destroyed by floods and had to turn back dejected.

◁ Hotel of Tents on the Shore of Erhai Lake ▷

When I first caught sight of it from the elevated bank of the Backward Flowing River, I thought it was the camping ground of some Tibetans who had gathered there to have a holiday in the wilderness. When I walked closer, I soon knew that I was wrong because there was a blackish grey yurt of yak skin among the tents that looked like a public eating place. Following the barking of a dog that had stretched its iron chain taut, a dark-faced, burly man with a typical high-plateau Tibetan complexion smiled to me and asked me what I wanted to eat and what kind of tent I wished to stay in. So it was a hotel of tents. I hurriedly said that I was just looking around. He led me all the way to the edge of Erhai Lake, where there was a row of snow white tents with black designs. The burly fellow lifted the curtain of a large tent and told me that eight or 10 people could sleep in it and it was most suitable for a group of young tourists. He also ushered me into a medium-sized tent for two people. There were two spring beds in it with a small cupboard in between.

I was told that it was 10-plus yuan per night for a bed. He also told me that in addition to providing sleeping quarters, they also served food and drinks. There were boats on the lake for rent, an arrow-shooting range on the bank, and horse-riding on the grass at the mouth of the Backward Flowing River.



1. The Backward Flowing River broadens in its lower reaches and the water in the river is transparently clear.
2. The Tent Hotel also provides the tourists with horses for pleasure riding.
3. A tent for two persons costs only 40 yuan per night.
4. The Tent Hotel on the shore of Lake Erhai opens only for three months in June, July and August.
5. A beautiful marsh at the place where the Backward Flowing River empties into Lake Erhai
6. The edge of Lake Erhai is crowded with unknown creatures.

Golden Lake Shore of Rape Flowers

Around July every year, as many as a million acres of rape flowers bloom on the shore of Qinghai Lake. The yellow flowers form a golden border lining more than half the circumference of the deep blue lake, presenting a magnificent view.



1. The rape fields in the mountains take on a variety of shapes.
2. Basking in the beauty of nature
3. The dense rape flowers extend for almost 100 kilometres and form a golden ring around Lake Qinghai.
4. More bee keepers gather at Qinghai Lake in July than other months.
5. Honey produced from totally unpolluted rape
6. Busy bee keepers
7. Wild flowers in the grass by the lake (by Chen Zhun)

Fragrance in the Air

After returning to the national highway, we travelled further west and soon came to the shore of Qinghai Lake. On the way, I imagined that the lake must be a body of blue water surrounded by green grass. But when we reached the lake, I found that it had a golden border.

By the month of July, rapeseed has long been harvested in the South China and has even become clear cooking oil. But the rape flowers at Qinghai Lake are blooming. The flowers, a rich yellow, extended from the foot of the mountains down to the lake shore and westward along the national highway for more than 50 kilometres. Our eyes were dazzled by their bright colour, and we had to narrow our eyes to admire the scenery. Qinghai, meaning Blue Sea, was overshadowed by the golden sea of flowers.

The yellow flowers were as brilliant as a brocade and the air was laden with their rich fragrance. One did not have to go close and touch them; their fragrance continually wafted into our jeep and our nostrils, making us sneeze violently.

If the fragrance of the flowers were actually tangible, it would have cast a mist before our eyes and limited visibility to only five metres.

The Clouds of Bees

There were also swarms of bees, attracted by the flowers and their fragrance.

The bees hummed and buzzed by the July lake. All along the edge of the lake, about every 100 metres, was a tent and a pile of beehives in boxes. To our surprise, we found that there were more non-local beekeepers who had come to stay here temporarily to tend their bees, than local people.

The front glass of each passing vehicle was dotted with crushed bees knocked dead by the speeding vehicle. There were residues of pollen and honey, too. I touched the residues with my finger and put the finger in my mouth and found that it was real honey. I realized that honey comes directly from the flowers – that the bees do not make honey, but merely gather it.

◁ Flower-Chasing Bee-Keepers ▷

I did not know that the bee-keepers on the shore of Qinghai Lake sold their honey as it was produced. When I was informed by a tourist, I immediately went to the nearest tent with the intention of tasting the freshest rape flower honey.

As I approached the tent, the path was blocked by swarms of buzzing bees. In answer to my shout, "Is there anybody there?" a young man came out of the tent followed by a young woman carrying a suckling baby in her arms. The man told me not to be afraid and walk slowly into the tent. The tent contained a double bed, cabinets, table, chairs, a cooking stove and utensils. As there was no electricity, two safety lamps hung from the tent frame.

The host offered me a cup of honey water. I took a sip and found it was pleasantly sweet and gave off a delicate aroma of rape flowers. Feeling refreshed, I immediately bought one kilogramme of honey, half a kilogramme of royal jelly and another half a kilogramme of pollen. I paid only 300 yuan for the lot.

As I savoured the honey water, I asked the host about his flower-chasing experience. The young man, Wang Zhengde, and his wife were from Yanshan County in Yunnan Province. They had travelled throughout the greater part of China as they carried their boxes of bees to wherever there were flowers in all four seasons of the year. After a reunion lasting about two weeks with their parents and families around the Spring Festival, husband and wife would go to Luoping for the rape flowers, to Guangxi in March for the litchi flowers, to Shaanxi in May for the scholar tree flowers, to the plateau of Qinghai in June and July for the rape flowers, and to Liupan Mountain in Ningxia in autumn for the buckwheat flowers. And when the wild lilies and radish flowers were in full bloom in their home county, they would be eager to go back and spend some days at home in comfort.



Qinghai Lake — a Vast Sea

It Is Belittled to Be Called a Lake

It was hard to get away from the rape flowers. It took us a whole hour to walk through the 500-metre-wide rape fields. As there were yellow flowers everywhere, even our pupils seemed to have been dyed yellow. When we suddenly caught sight of Qinghai Lake, we found it unusually blue.

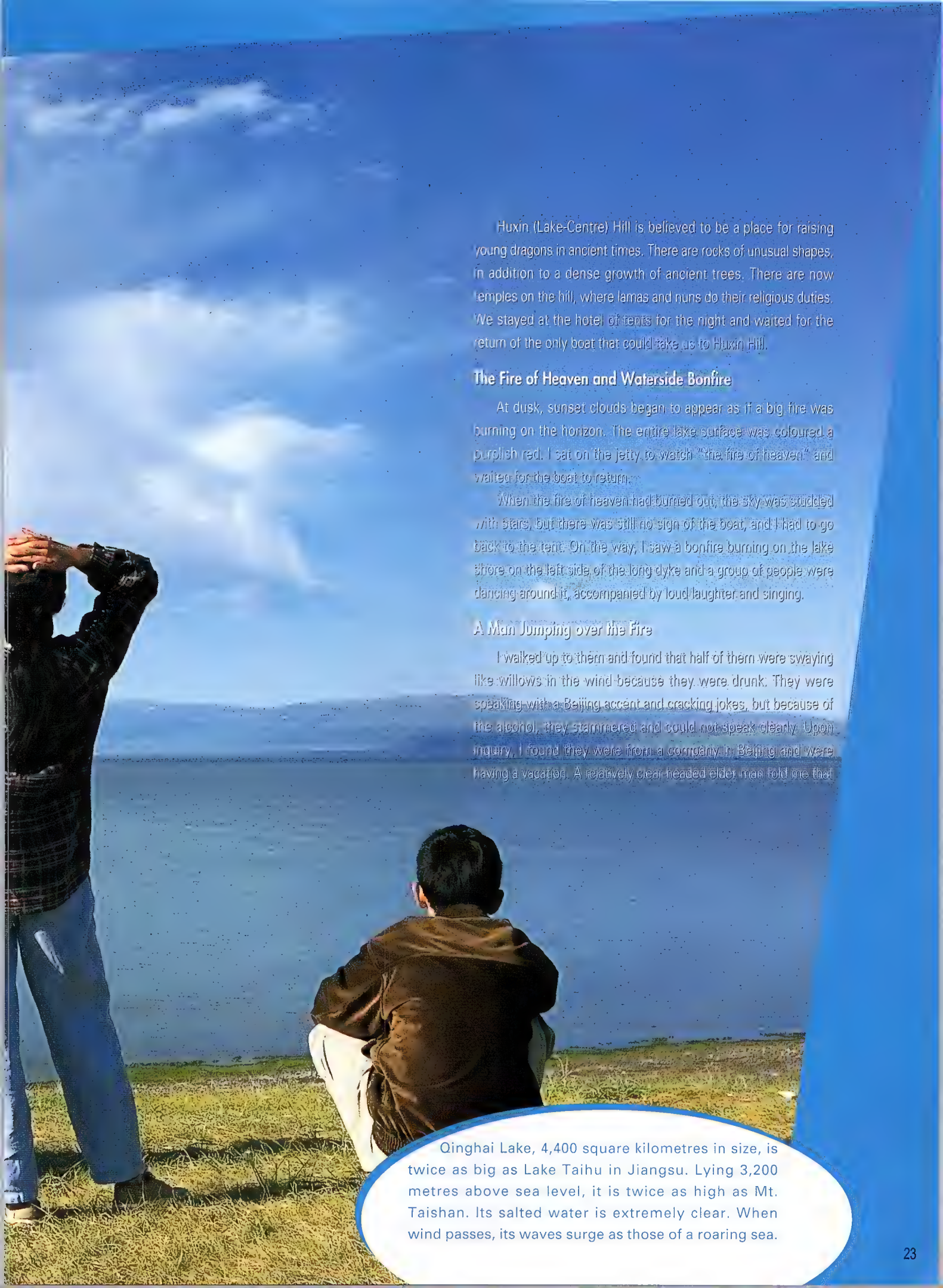
Qinghai, meaning Blue Sea, is the name given to the largest lake in China by the local Tibetan people. It is indeed like a sea — its water is salty and it extends far beyond the eye can see. It is really belittled to be called a lake.

When we climbed onto the long dyke, the wind began to blow, churning up white-crested waves on the lake. The waves surged one behind another and broke upon the shore just like surging tides on the sea. I would not have been surprised if an ocean-going liner had appeared on the horizon!

Only One Big Boat Can Go to the Central Isle

There was a man repairing a boat on shore. I asked him why Lake Qinghai was so blue, his answer was: First, because the lake is deep — the deepest place is more than a hundred metres; second, because the water is clear as there is almost no man-made pollution; third, because the sky is blue — there are more sunny days than cloudy days in a year — and when the blue sky is reflected in the lake, it makes the lake look even more blue.

I asked him if I could get to the Huxin Hill situated at the centre of the lake by the boat he was repairing, he said, "No. My boat is too small and the lake is too big. As wind may arise at any time and raise waves, no ordinary boat can take passengers there, except a large luxurious one. You came at the wrong time. The boat was chartered by a tourist group yesterday and it should be back this afternoon."



Huxin (Lake-Centre) Hill is believed to be a place for raising young dragons in ancient times. There are rocks of unusual shapes, in addition to a dense growth of ancient trees. There are now temples on the hill, where lamas and nuns do their religious duties. We stayed at the hotel of tents for the night and waited for the return of the only boat that could take us to Huxin Hill.

The Fire of Heaven and Waterside Bonfire

At dusk, sunset clouds began to appear as if a big fire was burning on the horizon. The entire lake surface was coloured a purplish red. I sat on the jetty to watch "the fire of heaven" and waited for the boat to return.

When the fire of heaven had burned out, the sky was studded with stars, but there was still no sign of the boat, and I had to go back to the tent. On the way, I saw a bonfire burning on the lake shore on the left side of the long dyke and a group of people were dancing around it, accompanied by loud laughter and singing.

A Man Jumping over the Fire

I walked up to them and found that half of them were swaying like willows in the wind because they were drunk. They were speaking with a Beijing accent and cracking jokes, but because of the alcohol, they stammered and could not speak clearly. Upon inquiry, I found they were from a company in Beijing and were having a vacation. A relatively clear-headed elder man told me that

Qinghai Lake, 4,400 square kilometres in size, is twice as big as Lake Taihu in Jiangsu. Lying 3,200 metres above sea level, it is twice as high as Mt. Taishan. Its salted water is extremely clear. When wind passes, its waves surge as those of a roaring sea.

they had never expected Qinghai Lake to be as big as a sea, and, over excited, they drank too much.

As they were singing and dancing joyously, a young man suddenly dashed towards the bonfire. As the others cried out in alarm, he had already jumped over to the other side of the fire. With him setting an example, the others all followed suit. Aided by wine, the singing and dancing became increasingly passionate. I seemed to see phoenixes dancing in the fire.

Summer in Daytime and Winter at Night

It was warm and comfortable in the sunlight in daytime, but at night the temperature dropped to 10 °C and lower. The caressing warm breeze suddenly changed into cold wind. I had miscalculated, thinking that a woollen sweater and a windbreaker would be enough to protect me against the cool summer on the plateau, and never imagined that even a down coat would not be too warm at night. After watching the bonfire party, I returned to the hotel tent and huddled in the quilt to keep warm. Although I had covered myself with the padded quilt and added a cotton blanket on top, my feet were still cold. I had to put all the clothes I had on the blanket before I could go to sleep.



1. At the height of a bonfire party, people follow one another to jump over the bonfire.
2. The most popular way of cooking naked carp on the plateau is frying it in oil.
3. The naked carp at the mouth of the Buha River is larger because the water temperature is higher and there are more nutrients in the water.

◁ Naked Carp – the Only Fish in the Lake ▷

Although Lake Qinghai is a huge body of water, the naked carp is the only fish that can survive in it because of its high elevation, low water temperature, lack of oxygen and salty water.

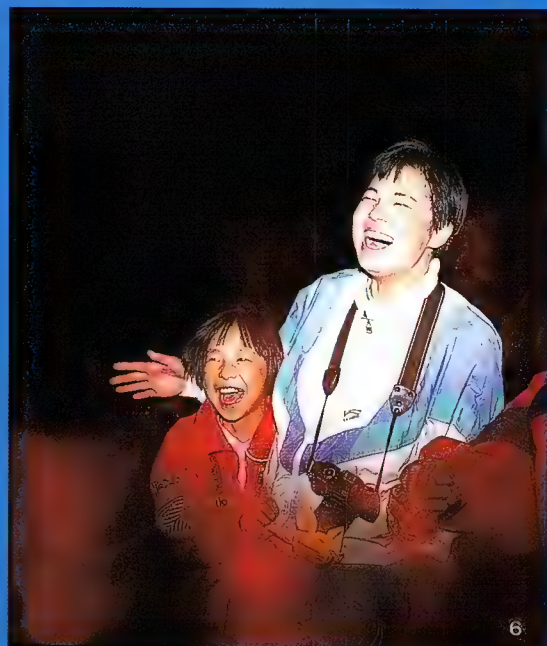
Naked carp is a scaleless fish and its Latin name is *Gymnocypris przewalskii*. As it lives in an adverse natural environment, it grows very slowly and takes about 10 years to reach a pound in weight. In the past, because the Tibetan people living around the lake looked upon fish as belonging to the same family as the dragon, and because of the Buddhist taboo against eating animals without hooves or claws, people revered the fish and never touched them. For hundreds of years, the naked carp died only a natural death, except for a few that were caught by birds.

In 1958 when people from other places came to the plateau for economic development, they did not have to use any instrument to catch the fish, as they could simply catch them by hand, hit them with a stick or scoop them up with a basin. It was even easier in winter. Dig a hole into the ice on the lake's surface, and the fish would jump out by themselves! When there were too many fish to be shipped away, they were gutted and dried and sold to faraway places.

After more than 30 years of wanton fishing, the number of naked carp in the lake has reduced drastically. People began to wake up to the danger of over-fishing and set up a special office to protect the fish by limiting the catch. During my trip to Qinghai, I was able to taste fresh naked carp for the first time. The meat was tender and savoury, particularly when boiled.

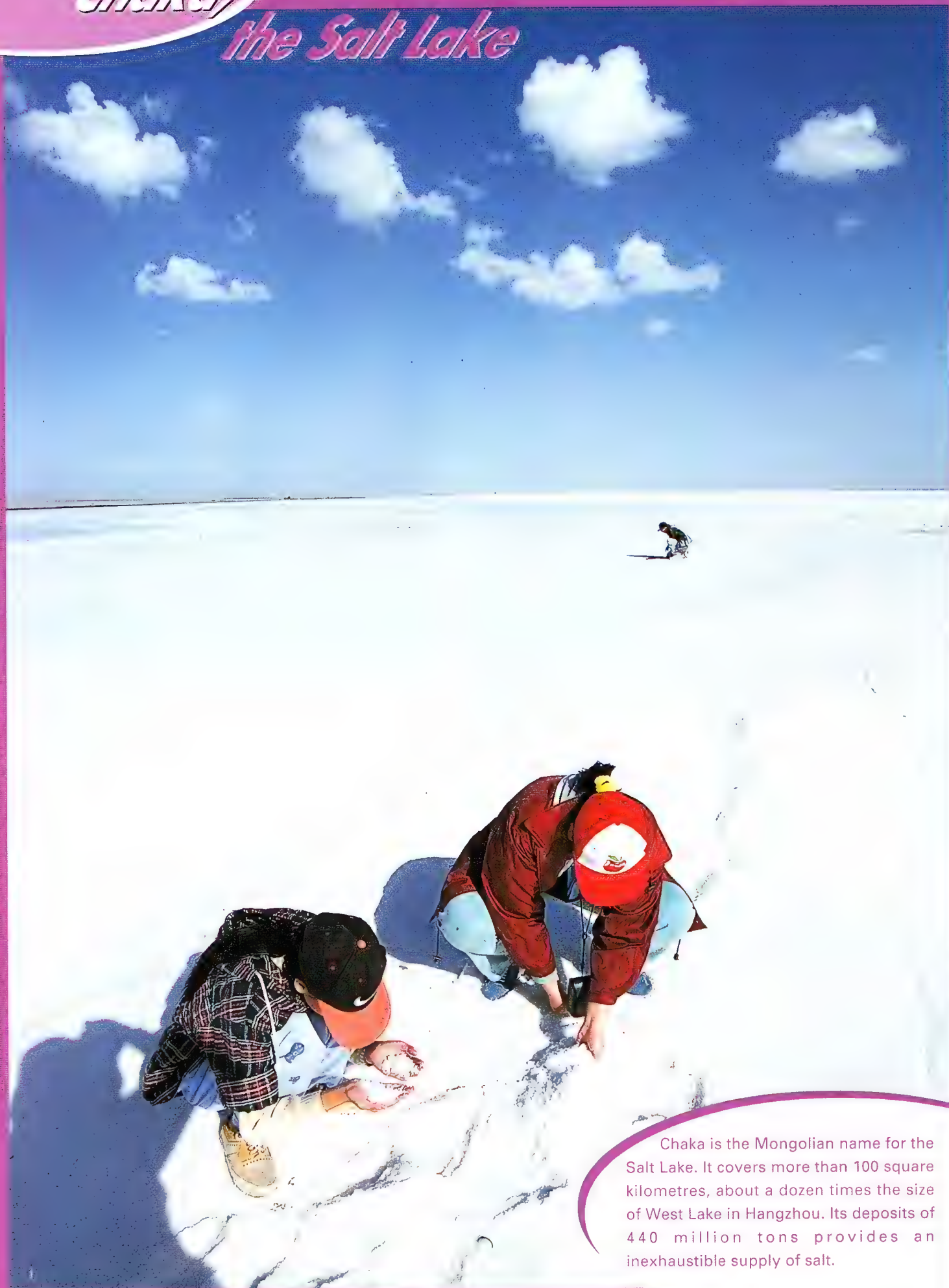
Naked carp was served in every restaurant I went into on the way to Qinghai. It costs about five yuan for half a kilogramme. You must tell the waiter that you want it boiled. Otherwise, it will be cooked by the local method by adding soya sauce, prickly ash, aniseed, hot pepper, etc. into it.





4. Lake Qinghai is more like a sea when wind blows.
5. The Tent Hotel is built in the architectural style of a lamasery.
6. Tourists having a good time at the lakeside at night

Chaka, *the Salt Lake*



Chaka is the Mongolian name for the Salt Lake. It covers more than 100 square kilometres, about a dozen times the size of West Lake in Hangzhou. Its deposits of 440 million tons provides an inexhaustible supply of salt.

1. The salt at Salt Lake looks like ice and snow.
2. A small train for tourists.
3. The snow-like "Great Green Salt"
4. Without seeing it with one's own eyes, no one would believe that grass can grow in salt. (by Chen Zhun)



One had to go further into the lake to sense its huge size. The crystallized white salt on the surface of the lake extended far to the horizon, where it merged with the snow-capped mountains. I wondered how much salt there is in the lake.

The Large Boat Struck a Rock and Cracked

I walked to the jetty the following morning after breakfast and still saw no sign of the large boat. I was appalled when I heard that the boat that had gone out two days ago had run onto a rock during a storm. The bottom of the boat cracked and the passengers were stranded on the island. Three smaller boats went to their rescue this morning. So, our trip to Huxin Island was called off.

We departed immediately and drove westward for 48 kilometres skirting the southern shore of the lake to reach a town named Heimahe (Black Horse River). After lunch we travelled further west on the national highway leading to Tibet and came to Chaka, the Salt Lake.

When we crossed the pass on the Xiangpi (Rubber) Mountain, we gasped for breath again because it is nearly 4,000 metres above sea level. After the pass, it was downhill all the way, and we soon reached a dry grassland east of Qaidam Basin.

It Was Hard to Keep Our Eyes Open

After driving the 80 kilometres to Chaka, the first thing that caught our eyes was the salt Lake that glittered white at the foot of snowy mountains. There was a saltworks on the edge of the Salt Lake. The so-called "Great Blue Salt" consumed by many Chinese is produced here. When I was a small boy, my grandma used to tell us that the "Great Blue Salt" was not only salty, but also gave a special flavour to the food. She said she ate food cooked with "Great Blue Salt" even when she was young, as did her grandmother. Chaka has been supplying salt for hundreds of years.

In addition to producing salt, the saltworks also entertain sight-seeing visitors. A train pulled by a small diesel tractor took us towards the centre of the lake. Before the train had moved 1,000 metres over the lake, we could hardly keep our eyes open because the bright sunlight glared strongly on the snow of salt. It was like travelling in the world of ice and snow at the North Pole.

Pocketing a Small Crystal of Salt

We jumped off the train as soon as it came to a stop, and stepped gingerly on the surface of the lake at first for fear that the salt crust would break and plunge us into the brine below. We soon realised that the salt crust was hard and solid and would never break no matter how hard we stepped on it. I put a hand into a hole in the salt and pick up a hexagonal piece of salt which looked exactly like a natural crystal. It was so lovable that I wrapped it in a piece of paper and put it stealthily into my pocket. When the guide from the saltworks saw what I was doing, he told us that we could take for free as much as we liked.



Bird Islands — a Paradise for Birds



Not far from the place where the Buha River flows into the lake on its northwestern side are two bird islands, different in size and shape. Birds gather here every year to regenerate. April and May are the most bustling bird months in the year.



Breaking Through an Iron Fence

We drove back to Heimahe Town, where we had our supper in the bright afterglow, came off the Qinghai-Tibet Highway and proceeded northwards along the elevated

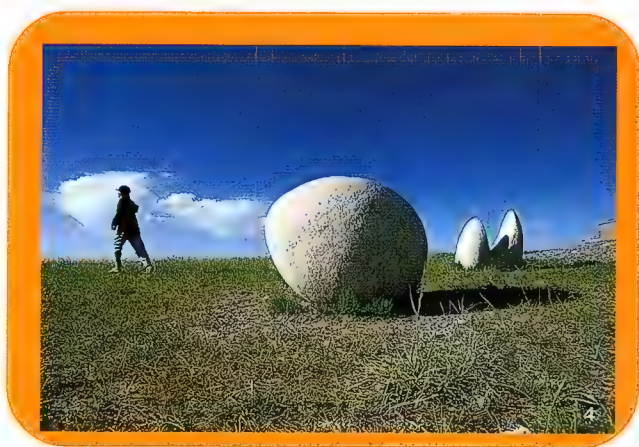
western bank of the lake towards the Bird Islands. The moon had come up and cast its silvery light on the lake, making it look more like a sea.

We stayed at the hotel at the Bird Islands. It was even colder than the night before.

Getting up early the following morning, we drove straight towards the Bird Islands about 15 kilometres away. All of us were in a cheerful frame of mind as we sped along the bank of the Buha River in the bright

1. Large and heavy cormorants taking off
2. The small Cormorant Island
3. May and June are the best months for bird watching.
4. Carved eggs on one side of the Bird Islands
5. The cliffs on the western side of the lake are the best spots for photographing the lake and birds.
6. Exquisite feather carvings





morning sunlight.

When we got there we found that the iron gate leading to the sight-seeing area was tightly closed. A sign near the gate said that it would not open until nine o'clock. I looked at my watch and found that it was not yet seven. How wasteful it would be to spend two beautiful morning hours waiting for the gate to open! We chose to forget about good manners for the time being and broke into the grounds through a hole in the iron fence. After walking about 500 metres, we came to the guard's cabin and woke him out of his sleep. Instead of becoming angry at our unceremonious break-in, the guard raised his head from his quilt and told us to place our money for the tickets on the table and unlock the gate for the car ourselves.

Fish-swallowing Birds

A solitary rock stands on Luci Island at the entrance to the lake. It is shaped like a super cannon shell with a round top that looks like the shaved head of a monk. Perched on the rock was a large flock of black cormorants, which the Chinese people call "fishing hawks". A closer look showed that there was a nest under each cormorant, but there were no eggs in it. This was because it was July, and the young cormorants hatched in spring had already grown as big as their parents.

On the other side of Cormorant Island is a long stretch of sheer cliff of naked white stone which looks rather frightening. It would be a most difficult undertaking if anyone wants to climb down and get closer to the kingdom of large and small birds. I walked to the edge of the cliff and looked down. At the foot of the high cliff was a group of cormorants catching fish in the waves. I saw one of them dive suddenly into the water and return quickly to a rock. It stretched its black neck, and the fish it had caught disappeared down its throat in no time.

Cormorants Taking Off Like Aircraft

It was very interesting to watch the cormorants from the top of the cliff. Since the cormorant is a large, heavy bird, it is rather difficult for it to take to the air from the water. It dashes forcefully forward in the water first and then begins to flap its wings while propelling itself forward with its feet in the water. It does not relax even when its body is above water, and continues to hit the water with its wings like a dragonfly skimming over the surface of the water. It is in the air only when it is more than 30 metres from the starting point. The whole process is like an aircraft taking off from a runway.

Home to 100,000 Birds

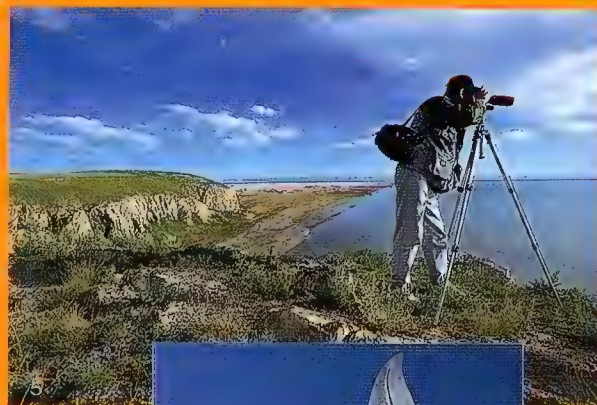
When we returned to the flat, sandy bank, we found a raised, smooth road leading to an expanse of sand dunes, which were the original bird islands when part of the sand dunes were submerged in water. Even though the water level has dropped and the islands have become sand dunes today, birds still come here regularly to build nests, lay eggs and hatch their young. Every spring, more than 10 species of birds, including seagulls, wild geese, wild ducks and cranes, gather here in large flocks after flying long distances from South China and Southeast Asia. The egg-laying time is the busiest time for the birds, when this place of less than one square kilometre is home to as many as 100,000 birds.

It is said that May and June are the best months for bird watching. Bird eggs of all colours cover the sand dunes like pebbles on a river flat. Even the sun and the sky will be blotted out by the birds, and bird watchers have to carry umbrellas to protect themselves from the birds' droppings.

Permanent Bird Residents

It was July and the wild geese, wild ducks and cranes were gone. But the seagulls were still there. This was because the young gulls had just begun to learn to fly and they had to wait until October when they would become fully fledged and could fly with their parents to the south.

There were as many as 10,000 seagulls alone, which flocked together on a large bay of the lake. Someone standing not far from me said, "This is the same flock of seagulls that makes Kunming their second home to pass the cold days in winter and spring." He said that since the environmental conditions of their habitat have improved, more and more birds come here to mate and hatch their young. Some migratory birds even have overcome their nature and stay at Qinghai in the winter as well as in the summer, thus becoming permanent residents.



Cheerful and Carefree Minority People



Watching the Rain in the Open Air

We lingered at the lake until it was already noon, and then drove along the west shore of the lake towards the north through a vast expanse of grassland. The highway leading to Qiequangou crossed the Xining-Golmud Railway and then climbed to the top of the elevated shore, while the railway hugged the lake. But there were few trains. For a distance of more than 30 kilometres from Qiequangou to Gangca, we did not see a single train.

The highway from Gangca to Haiyan was already a considerable distance from Qinghai Lake. As our jeep threaded its way through a long stretch of low hills, dark clouds rolled by in constantly changing shapes. Like gun smoke on a battlefield, they billowed threateningly towards us and then passed. From the top of a hill, we could see a dark cloud in the distance with threads of rain under it. There were several such patches of dark cloud around us, but the sun continued to shine brightly above us. Such a spectacular natural scene can only be

The highway that skirted the northern shore of Qinghai Lake gradually branches away from the lake. We were fascinated by the local Mongolian and Tibetan people, who have a lifestyle blended naturally with the environment.

enjoyed on a high plateau. As we were fascinated by the wonderful scene, the driver called out, "Let's go. The rain is coming." We turned round and saw an ominous dark cloud with rain was floating towards us. We quickly pushed one another into the jeep, started the engine and sped towards the east.

Sleeping in the Open When Drunk

We stopped at Hargai to take a rest. The Tibetan people, both men and women, in the streets of the town were all dressed in long robes and felt hats and could speak the Han language. Most of them were herdsmen from around the town. They warmly invited us to their

homes on the summer pasture in the mountains, but since there was no motor road leading to their homes, we had to politely decline.

The Tibetan and Mongolian people living around Qinghai Lake are cheerful and carefree by nature. After work, they often go with their friends or relatives to a wild mountain slope or the grassland to feast on beef and mutton, melons and vegetables, and enjoy wine to their hearts' content. When they are drunk, they would sleep in the open, and then sober up on the ride home on horseback. Soon after we had passed Gahai, we met two families who were picnicking by the roadside. One of the couples were Mongolian and the other, Tibetan. Both families lived in the county town of Gangca. They had participated in the nationalities sport meeting at Haiyan and were on their way home. Two motorcycles were parked by the roadside while they were enjoying their meal. They invited us to join them and offered us watermelon.

Sand Hills Extending to Grass Lake

Lake Gahai is the largest "satellite lake" of Qinghai Lake. It is even larger than the Small Lake and Grass Lake put together. Separated from Qinghai Lake



by a long stretch of sand hills, it is surrounded by sand dunes on three sides. The fourth side is a desolate beach. There were no inhabitants, nor roads. In contrast with the yellow sand, the lake looked particularly blue.

The sand dunes at Gahai extend for more than 30 kilometres. Even though the sand hills are quite high, there are no signs of shifting movement. The sand hills, covered by sparse wormwood here and there, reach as far as Grass Lake in eastern Qinghai Province.

At this point, our journey to Qinghai Lake had come to an end.

It was already lights-on time when we returned to Xining. In the lobby of the Qinghai Hotel where we were to stay, we saw several groups of tourists. We did not have to ask them to know that they were headed for Qinghai Lake.

Translated by Tang Bowen

1. The carefree Qinghai herdsmen often picnic in the wilderness after work.
2. The train to Golmud passes by Lake Gahai.
3. The herdsmen's summer grazing grounds are on the mountains. (Photo by Chen Zhun)
4. Tuojiatan herds his sheep and goes to places on his new motorcycle.

◁ Tuojiatan – the Mountain Chief ▷

After passing the mountain pass on Rubber Mountain on our way back from the snow-covered Caka, a vast expanse of green met our eyes. The big mountain was covered with thick green grass. The warm setting sun dramatically outlined the sheep grazing on the slope, and cooking smoke drifted up from the yurts in the valley. From a distance, I could hear the sound of children playing and dogs barking. I got out of the jeep and walked towards the grassy slope, intending to take a few photographs of the children, dogs and sheep. At this moment, a six-foot man emerged from a yurt, shouted, "Alo!" ("comrade" in Tibetan) to me in a loud voice and gave me such a surprise that I almost fell to the ground.

This man was Tuojiatan, the Mountain Chief. He was given this nickname because the local government had signed a 50-year unrevokable contract with him for the use of the mountains behind him as his family's grazing ground. So I had "trespassed" upon his "private domain". He walked over, sat down cross-legged with me on the grassy slope and began to chat about his grazing ground. He said he had more than 1,000 sheep and maintained that number by raising the young and selling the old. He bought a motorcycle, which conveniently took him from Black Horse River to Chaka for business. He also used the motorcycle to herd his sheep on the gentle mountain slopes. He also had a winter pasture by Qinghai Lake, where flowers of all colours were now in full bloom. He said that when I went down the mountain, I should take more photographs of it and publish them in the magazine so that people in other places would know that Tuojiatan's pasture was a beautiful place.



Tips for the Traveller



Qinghai Lake, in northeastern Qinghai Province, is the largest lake in China. The lake's surface is 3,196 metres above sea level. It covers an area of 4,500 square kilometres and 360 kilometres in circumference. The deepest place of the water is 30 metres.

Qinghai is called "Kuku Nor" in the Mongolian and "Tso Wenpo" in the Tibetan, both meaning "Blue Lake". With green mountains reflected in blue water, the lake area is noted for its picturesque scenery and extolled by the Tibetan people, who call the lake area "auspicious mid-summer grassland". June, July and August are the best months for touring the area.

Transportation: Hong Kong-Guangzhou by direct train or bus.

Guangzhou-Xining by regular flight every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Group Tour: Group tour to Qinghai Lake and Bird Islands can be arranged at big hotels in Xining. Major travel agencies include:
China Travel Service (Qinghai): Tel: (971)613 4667 Fax: (971) 614 2725

China International Travel Service (Qinghai): Tel: (971) 614 3711 Fax: (971)823 8721

China Youth Travel Service (Qinghai): Tel: (971) 614 4247 Fax: (971) 614 4248

China Trade Union Travel Service (Qinghai): Tel: (971) 823 8911 Fax: (971)614 2232

3. Itineraries:

One-Day Tour : Xining-Sun and Moon Mountain-Backward Flowing River-Qinghai Lake.

Two-Day Tour : Xining-Sun and Moon Mountain-Backward Flowing River-Qinghai Lake-Bird Islands.

Three-Day Tour: Xining-Qinghai Lake-Bird Islands-Chaka.

Four-Day Tour : Xining-Taer Monastery-Lake Qinghai-Bird Islands-Chaka-Longyang Gorge.

Independent Travellers: There is a regular bus departing from the bus station on Zhifang Street in the suburbs of Xining that goes directly to Chaka. On the way back, you can get off at Heimahe Town and hitch a ride to the Bird Islands. The best way is to hire a motor vehicle through a travel agency or hotel. A small or medium-sized vehicle costs 300-500 yuan a day. A return trip to the Bird Islands costs about 600 yuan. You can arrange your own itinerary and stop anywhere to enjoy the scenery. It is the least expensive if 10 or so people travel together.

Accommodation:

Qinghai Hotel (three-star), Xining: Standard room: 200-300 yuan per night.

Tel: (971)614 4888 614 4889 Fax: (971)6144145.

Xining Hotel (two-star), Xining: Standard room: 180-250 yuan per night.

Tel: (971) 823 8701 Fax: (971) 823 8798

Tent Hotel (one-star), on the shore of Qinghai Lake: Standard tent: about 200 yuan, bed: 30 yuan. Tel: (971)511018-8011.

Bird Islands Hotel, near Bird Islands: Standard room: about 200 yuan, bed: 30 yuan.

Food and Drink: There are Muslim and Sichuan restaurants as well as places serving wheaten food of local flavour in all the scenic areas, towns and villages along the way. Many of the dishes are prepared from naked carp and mutton. There is also rice. Mineral water, distilled water, soft drinks and instant noodles are available in the shops along the way.

Shopping: Antelope skulls, Buddhist beads, Tibetan daggers and reproductions of

mural paintings are available in the tourist shops at the Sun and Moon Mountains Pass and Bird Islands.

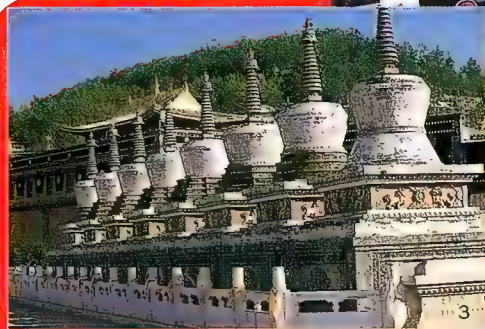
Cautions:

1. Do not forget to carry some warm clothes with you. The temperature in the area usually drops to

10 °C in the morning and evening, even in summer.

2. Sun lotion and ointments are indispensable because of the high altitude, strong ultraviolet rays and dry air.

3. Move about slowly and steadily at the Sun and Moon Mountain and Rubber Mountain passes, as both places are over 3,600 metres above sea level.



1. A great mosque at Dongguan in Xining

2. Snacks Centre in Xining serves refreshments of local flavour.

3. Taer Monastery in Huangzhong, 30 kilometres from Xining, is the largest lama temple in Qinghai Province.

4. Swift current and deep valley at Longyang Gorge

5. Tibetan hawkers peddling souvenirs outside the Bird Islands Hotel.

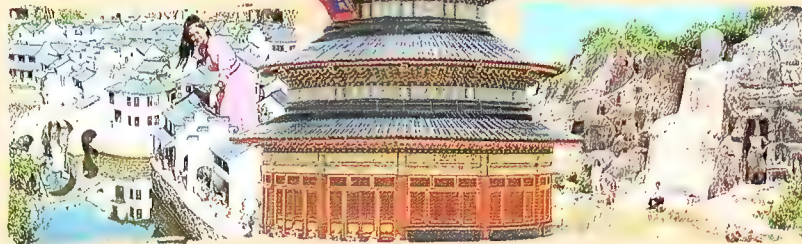
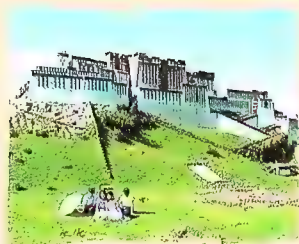
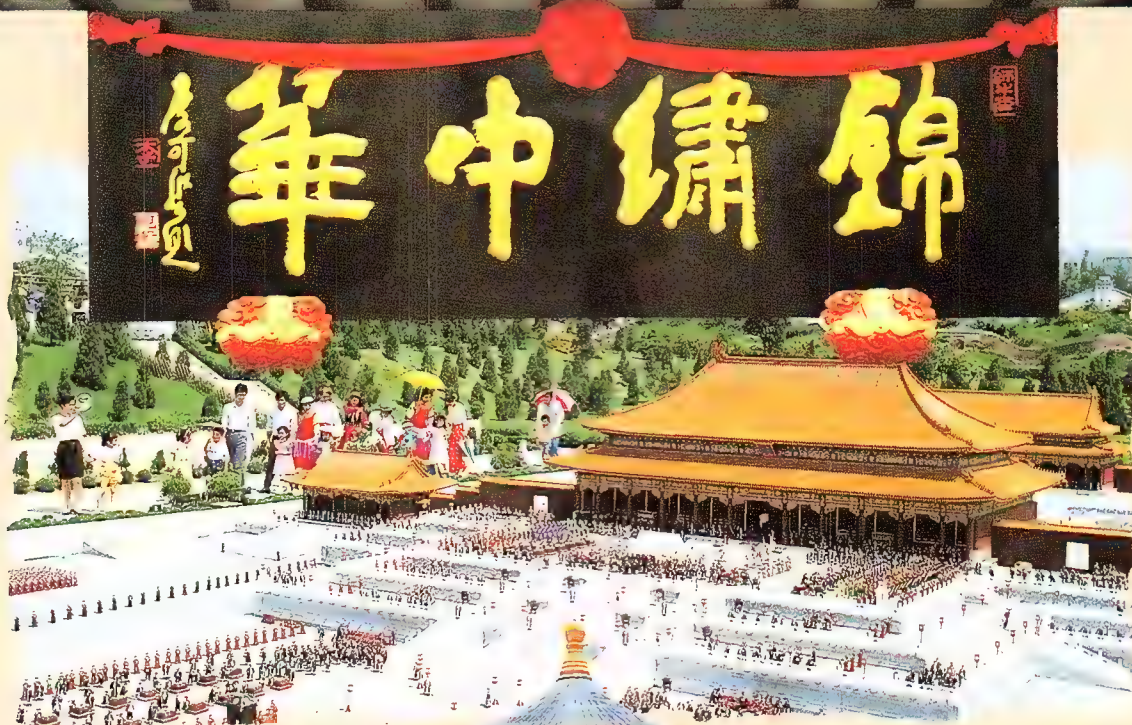


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DISCOVERIES

Since remote antiquity, migration has always been one of man's major means of survival. Foul climate, worsening living conditions, war and turmoil – there are a hundred and one reasons for people to flee home and seek a better lot elsewhere. More than two millennia ago, the Chinese were already part of that wash of mankind. After 1840, South Asia was the destination for a massive flow of Chinese, while Western colonialists abducted large numbers of Chinese coolies to North America, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world.

Nobody can understand the agony of being forced to abandon one's homeland without personally experiencing it. Once the boat launches forth upon the bosom of the ocean, and the last blue line of native land fades away on the horizon, the wayfarer is cast loose from the secure anchorage of his cultural heritage, family and settled life and sent adrift to an unknown world. The tooting of the steam horn never fails to instill a lingering sorrow in his heart. Today, Chinese settlers are found in every nook and corner of the world. By the sweat of their brow many have gone from rags to riches, adding glory to the motherland where their roots are.

China's Hainan Island is home to a large group of Chinese who had somehow survived in alien lands against all odds but who eventually returned to their motherland when their adopted homeland waxed hostile towards them. When Britain re-occupied Malaya after WW II, it enacted an anti-Chinese emergency criminal law; in the early 1960s, strained diplomatic relations between Indonesia and China brought tremendous misfortune on those Chinese who had made Indonesia their home. In the late 1970s, tension between China and Vietnam rendered many Chinese residents in Vietnam homeless.

Now, several decades later, how are those former refugees who have returned from overseas faring? It is with this question in mind that I visited one of their new settlements, Xinglong Farm on Hainan Island.

Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong.

FARMERS ON HAINAN ISLAND:

STORIES OF RETURNED OVERSEAS CHINESE





A SETTLEMENT FOR RETURNED OVERSEAS CHINESE

Situated where the Sun River flows gently through the mountains cocooned in dense rubber tree forests in central Hainan, Xinglong was a thriving town during the Qing Dynasty. The name means "Prosperity", but before long the town fell into oblivion as a result of war and turmoil. According to old-timers, by the early 1950s the town had been reduced to a cluster of run-down abodes, and when night fell, the entire place was enveloped in darkness save for a single lamp which was lit in a tiny shop.

In 1951, Xinglong became a settlement of more than 700 Chinese refugees from Malaya. They were joined by new arrivals from 21 countries and regions until the population swelled to more than 10,000 and the town emerged as the centre of China's largest farm built by returned overseas Chinese.



By herculean efforts the returned overseas Chinese have turned what used to be a vast expanse of wild hillsides into 10,667 hectares of fertile farmland.

Recently a tourist centre has been developed in the hot spring zone and has become a new source of revenue for the farm. Thirty-one hotels have emerged in Xinglong, taking advantage of the booming tourism and the opportunity engendered by the incorporation of Hainan Island as a province. Today's Sun River is no longer a sleepy backwater. More and more holiday-makers are arriving. Besides bathing in the hot water and the sunshine, enjoying the rich verdure of local vegetation, they also learn something about the well-known farm built by returned overseas Chinese.

The farmers I visited all impressed me deeply.

1. Xinglong Town in the old days
2. Xinglong matches its nickname Hotel Town
3. The quiet Sun River running by Xinglong
4. A hotel of Southeast Asian architecture
5. Dinner is on the table — Southeast Asian food is served.

The picture on the previous page is printed with permission from the HKSAR Government.

Lin Laijiao

is the girl (second left) in the picture. She returned to China from Malay with her parents in 1952. The little girl in the photo is now a happy grandma.



Girl in the photo, now a happy grandma

In the farm headquarters I opened an album and saw a picture of three girls with Premier Zhou Enlai on a visit to the farm. I was told one of them lived in an apartment near by. Lin Laijiao arrived in Xinglong as a five-year-old girl, and became a latex-tapping worker after finishing middle school. Retired three years ago, she spent most of her time taking care of her granddaughter in Haikou.

When Lin opened the door and let me in, I found her to be in her fifties. "How lucky you are," her younger daughter said. "Mom has just returned today, and she's leaving the day after tomorrow." At a glance I found her home rather spacious, tidy, and clean. Lin told me that this was a three-bedroom apartment 80 square metres in floorspace. "It was built with money the farm had earned from tourism," she added.

"When we first arrived, the going was tough," she continued.

"We were living in a thatched cottage and sleeping on a bed woven from bamboo strips. In those years the weather was unfriendly. Typhoons, drought, waterlogging, plus plague — it seemed there was no end to such disasters." She told me that her father died when she was nine. It was with subsidies from the farm that her mother managed to bring her and her five sisters and brothers up.

Our topic turned to the premier's visit to the farm.

"He came one February day in 1960," she said, "and I was among a dozen or so students the school sent to greet him in Nanshan, where we grew a lot of coffee. When we saw the premier, we were so excited that we ran up and mobbed him instantly. Because we were kids, the bodyguard did not bother to keep us out of the way. The premier asked us if we were doing well in our studies and if we had got used to living in China."

I showed her the album and she was pleased to see her childhood image in the picture. To my great amazement, she smiled exactly the same way as she did in the photo.



Guo Fusheng used to be a handsome young man in Indonesia, as is depicted in this yellowed picture taken 60 years ago. The white-haired old man now lives a happy life by singing and playing guitar at the Hongye Indonesian Village.

1. Lin Laijiao edges her way in to hold Premier Zhou Enlai's hand when the beloved statesman visits the farm on February 7, 1960.
2. When Lin Laijiao smiles, she is still that little girl.
3. A photo of young Guo Fusheng taken in Indonesia
4. Guo Fusheng goes to work.
5. The two of them, both overseas Chinese from Indonesia, having been playing together for 60 years

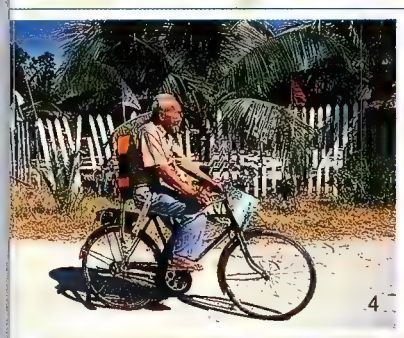
Hongye (Red Coconut) Village in Xinglong is known for its high output of red coconuts. Impressed by the village's roadside location and its exotic coconut tree forests, an investor showed business acumen by turning the village into a tourist attraction after the Indonesian style. Every afternoon the village is thronged with visitors, and the local parking lots are often packed to overflowing.

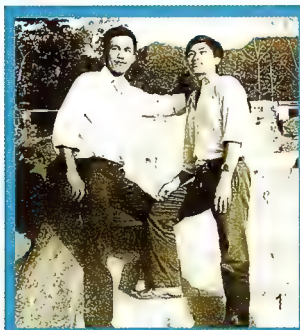
One morning, I arrived at Hongye Village for a look. While in the village I encountered a silver-haired old man riding a bicycle, with a guitar slung over his shoulder. He told me his name was Guo Fusheng and that he was 76 years old. "Why should you ride a bicycle at your age?" I asked him. "Just to keep myself in shape – my home is only one mile away." A native of Fujian Province, Guo used to run a small business in Java, Indonesia. In 1960, when Indonesia turned hostile against local Chinese inhabitants and robbed them of the right to do small businesses, Guo, reluctant to give up his Chinese citizenship, returned to China with his wife and three children.

Another old man, also carried a guitar on his shoulder, arrived on a motorbike. This was Uncle Zhang, 77, born in Indonesia, the son of a settler from Guangdong. He was almost 40 when he returned to his motherland aboard a ship sent by the Chinese government. He told me that in the beginning he had a hard time getting used to life in the farm. "In Indonesia we were small businessmen, and were not used to making a living by reclaiming the land and transplanting rice seedlings in paddy fields. My hands were worn by calluses. At the time China was suffering three years of natural calamities, and life was really tough."

Both Guo and Zhang had learned how to play the guitar as a kid while in Indonesia, and in the decades after their return to China they often played music together. Whenever the village had foreign visitors, they were invited to perform. Now, with tourism booming in the village, they have become sought-after musicians to amuse the tourists. "Do you still play as volunteers?" I asked. "No, we earn several hundred yuan a month," they answered.

Soon a few more amateur performers arrived at the site where they were going to give performances, including two brothers of the Lin family who were good at singing and dancing. Lin Ruifang, the elder brother, was the only one of the dozen or so amateur artists who was still working on the rubber plantation as a latex-tapping worker. He readily accepted my request to see how he collected latex from the rubber trees.





Lin Ruifang was 12 when he returned to China. He has worked as a rubber tree planter for several decades. He is now also a singer at the Hongye Village.



Hu, sales manager of the Kongleyuan Hotel and my guide, arranged for a car to take me to the rubber tree plantation. Actually, he himself had yet to see how raw rubber was collected during the years he was working in Hainan. At 2:00 a.m. we got up and immediately made for the plantation. The car nosed its way through a dense forest until it pulled up where Lin Ruifang was waiting for us. He was wearing a helmet with a headlight, with a bamboo basket hanging from his waist.

We chatted as we trudged among the rubber trees. Lin, 49, returned from Indonesia with his parents in 1960. As his wife also worked as a latex-tapper, the couple were certainly leading a hard life.

"How many trees do you cut every day?"

"Three hundred."

"Why do you start work so early?"

"Because in daylight rubber stops running out of the trees."

In the pitch dark we reached our destination. The rubber tree forest was infested with wild grass, and we stumbled along as we made for the trees. I had so many questions to ask Lin, but, for fear of delaying his work, I told him to go ahead and work without bothering with me. Even so, he kept answering my questions while busying himself over his task. From time to time he reminded us to watch our steps.



I followed close behind and watched carefully. Tapping the rubber trees (*Hevea brasiliensis*) for the latex calls for a high level of skill. Lin took out a cup and cleaned its bottom of coagulated latex with his hand. Passing the tip of his thumb over a cut in the tree bark, he picked up a long thread of hardened latex which had been left there the previous day. "This is still useful and can be sold to the purchasing station for some money," he told me, tossing the latex into his basket. He then took out a knife with a bent blade and cut a thin strip from the bark along a previous cut. He had hardly finished the cut when milky liquid started oozing out and dripping into the cup along a narrow surface with a 30-degree gradient. According to Lin, a skilled worker could manage to make 15 successive cuts into the bark within a thickness of one centimetre – only thus can the latex output of a rubber tree be maximized. The depth of each knife cut has to be proper: if the cut is too shallow, the latex refuses to flow; and if it is too deep, the tree is injured.

According to Lin, a rubber tree can last a long time if its bark is properly cut and it is well protected from typhoons. "The first knife cut is made at a height of 1.2 metres," he said, gesticulating at a tree with his hand, "and it takes exactly 10 years for the cuts to cover all the way to the root; then another 10 years are needed to cover the other side of the tree with cuts. After two full cycles, the tree survives exactly 40 years."

Lin finished his assignment of the 300 trees well before six o'clock. An hour later, he was to return to collect the latex, and three hours later, he was to make his appearance at a performance at the tourist centre. His was indeed a strenuous schedule.

1. Young Lin Ruifang (left)
2. Collecting the latex
3. By six o'clock in the morning, Lin Ruifang has finished his daily assignment of 300 trees.
4. Lin Ruifang performing at Hongye Village.

Zheng Wentai

is an ambitious environmentalist. He has come from Hong Kong to invest heavily in the land where he once worked to build a botanical garden, which is one of China's four major environmental projects.



1. The casually dressed Zheng Wentai
2. How can Zheng help feeling proud of his botanical garden behind him?
3. A corner of Zheng Wentai's tropical garden





Zheng Wentai is a household name in Xinglong. A few years ago, he shocked the entire town by selling most of his hotel shares and investing the money in the great wilderness. Today, his tropical botanical garden is one of China's four major environmental protection pace-setters, and it was even entered into a United Nations competition for a place among the world's Top 500 Environmental Projects.

When I arrived at the botanical garden for an interview, Zheng was not in the office. His staff members searched everywhere and found him working on a newly planted lawn together with some gardeners. I learned I was not the only journalist to have failed to find him in his office. Once, when a group of reporters arrived to interview him, he was found on a scaffolding directing a construction work. On another occasion, Zheng was weeding in the fields when a businessman, who wanted to talk to him but who did not know who he was, bumped into him and asked, "Where can I find Mr. Zheng Wentai?" Zheng mischievously raised a finger and pointed a direction.

When Zheng finally "materialized" in front of me, I was surprised to see him attired in a manner that could not be more casual: a pair of sandals, a Shaoxing-style hat, short pants, and a T-shirt.

"I was 13 when I returned from Indonesia in 1960," he told me. "Father sent me back to attend a school in Beijing exclusively for children of overseas Chinese."

I told him I happened to be living in the neighbourhood of that school as a child, and I often went swimming in the school's swimming pool.

"I happened to be the supervisor of the swimming pool — it was part of my Students' Association assignment," he said. We both laughed at the coincidence.

"Why did you choose this place, of all places?"

"When I graduated from school in 1964, I came to Xinglong Farm, where I worked for five years. Did you see the Nanwang Reservoir over there? I took part in building it. In 1971, I left Xinglong and went to college in Hong Kong as an architecture major. In 1982, I returned to the mainland in search of opportunities. I was involved in the construction or renovation of a number of buildings and airports, and also invested in the hotel business. In 1992 I began this environmental project, at this place where I had shed sweat. I made the choice not for commercial considerations but to restore the place to what it used to be — an environment teeming with tropical plants, in which wild life could grow and propagate naturally. While putting the endangered plants under proper protection, I have also moved some of them into a centre where they can be better preserved. I've spent 70 million yuan on the project, and have planned to add several hundred million yuan in the next five years. Now my garden covers 400 hectares, in which I have planted more than 3,000 strains of vascular plants."

Zheng showed me around his garden. It was indeed a man-made green world. A vast expanse of wilderness yesterday has become a lovely paradise of more than 300,000 tropical plants.

Lian Haishun took this picture in Indonesia in 1959, one year before he was driven out of that country. His old house at the farm surrounded by a garden is especially cosy.



1. Lian Haishun as a child, photo taken in Indonesia
2. Lian Haishun is a good barber who can cut his own hair as well as others.
3. Lian and his wife in their garden
4. Picking coconuts for his guests

I rambled through a cluster of green trees, crossed a tiny bridge and arrived at the house of Lian Haishun, 46, who returned from Indonesia in 1960. He looked smart in an Indonesian-style T-shirt. Visiting the homes of returned overseas Chinese, according to Hu, my guide, was one of the services his hotel was operating for its guests. The programme was rather popular with foreign visitors.

The house of the Lians was built in 1970 and looked a bit too old. His wife, however, turned this unostentatious abode into a scene of liveliness by planting many flowers around it. What caught my fancy was their orchard, a two-mu slope grown with more than a dozen fruit trees, including coconuts, mangos, bananas, loquats. Some of them I had never heard of and certainly had never tasted. My hospitable host kept picking fresh fruits from the trees for us to taste. He told me the fruits were grown to meet family needs, but some of them were sold to augment the family income.

Sitting in the family's tiny courtyard was one of the cosiest experiences of my life. The fruits hung heavy overhead and within easy reach. Behind the courtyard, a small stream flowed gently by and disappeared into the depths of greenery in the distance. Bamboo grew profusely by the stream. "People come to buy bamboo stalks and use them as rice cookers," Lian said. I had just finished imbibing the juice from a coconut when his wife handed me a cup of freshly ground coffee and a plate of Indonesian snacks dyed green with the juice of some edible green leaves.

I spotted several beehives in the corner of the courtyard. The Lians had been raising wild bees they had caught in the hills for more than a dozen years. In some years, they kept as many as a dozen beehives, each containing more than 10,000 bees. From each beehive the family gathered four bottles of honey every week. But the wild bees had simply fly away since last year, when the farm applied insecticides to the fields.

I felt sorry for him and hoped one day the bees would come back.



Translated by Ling Yuan



興隆華僑農場地理位置示意圖
Location Map of Xinglong Overseas Chinese Farm

Tips for the Traveller

♦ Transport:

Xinglong is 207 kilometres from Haikou. There is a daily shuttle service which sets out for Haikou from Xinglong at 9:00 a.m., and leaves for Xinglong at 2:30 p.m. from Haikou at the Haikou Hotel. Buses running between Haikou and Sanya also pass Xinglong with a bus fare of 30-50 yuan, but one has to find other means of transportation to cover the few kilometres after getting down from the bus on the highway. The distance between Xinglong and Sanya is 106 kilometres, which costs 20 yuan by bus.

♦ Accommodation:

There are more than 30 hotels available. A standard room costs 858 yuan at Kangleyuan Hotel, 775 yuan at Jinyindao Hotel, 388 yuan at Mingyang Villas, and 420 yuan at Hairili Hotel. (Discounts are offered to groups and during sluggish season.)

♦ Tourist Costs:

1. All hotels have hot spring baths. At Kangleyuan Hotel, it costs 88 yuan to have a hot spring bath, but those who stay in the hotel can get free tickets.
2. A visit to the Hongye Indonesian Village, including a performance of folklore and customs, costs 30 yuan for admission.
3. Admission fee for the Tropical Botanical Garden is 20 yuan.

One may also choose to watch rubber tree-cutting, or visit a coconut forest, a pepper garden, or an overseas Chinese family.



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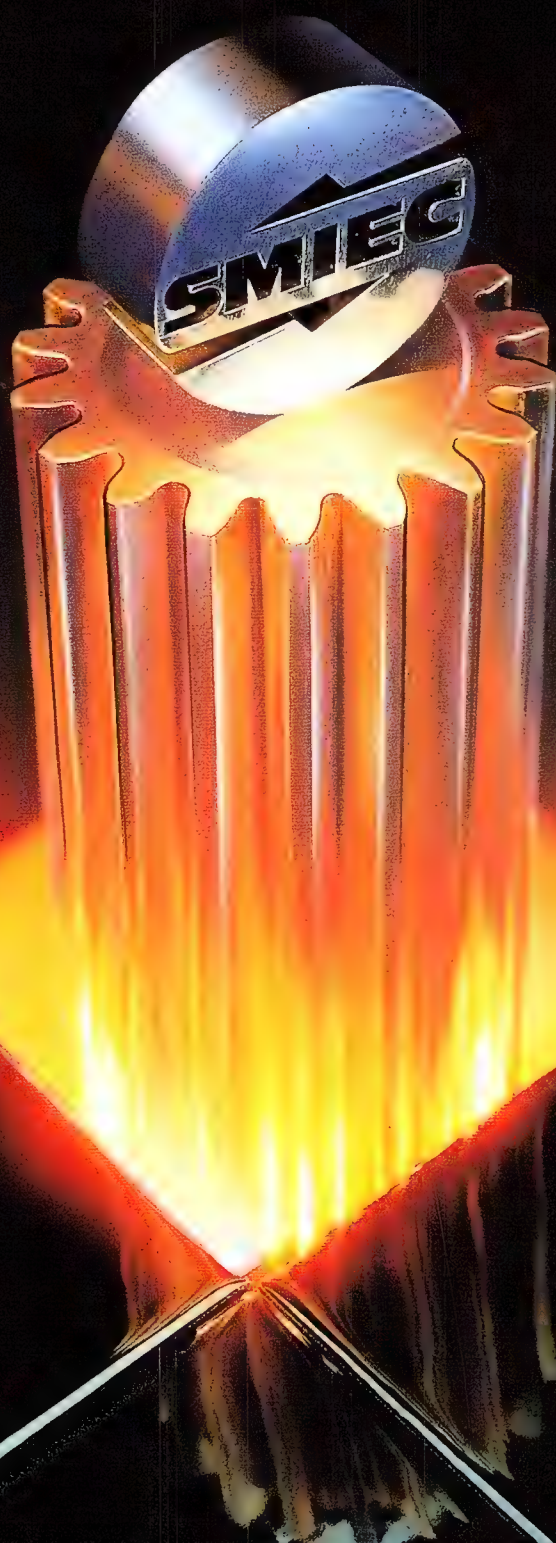
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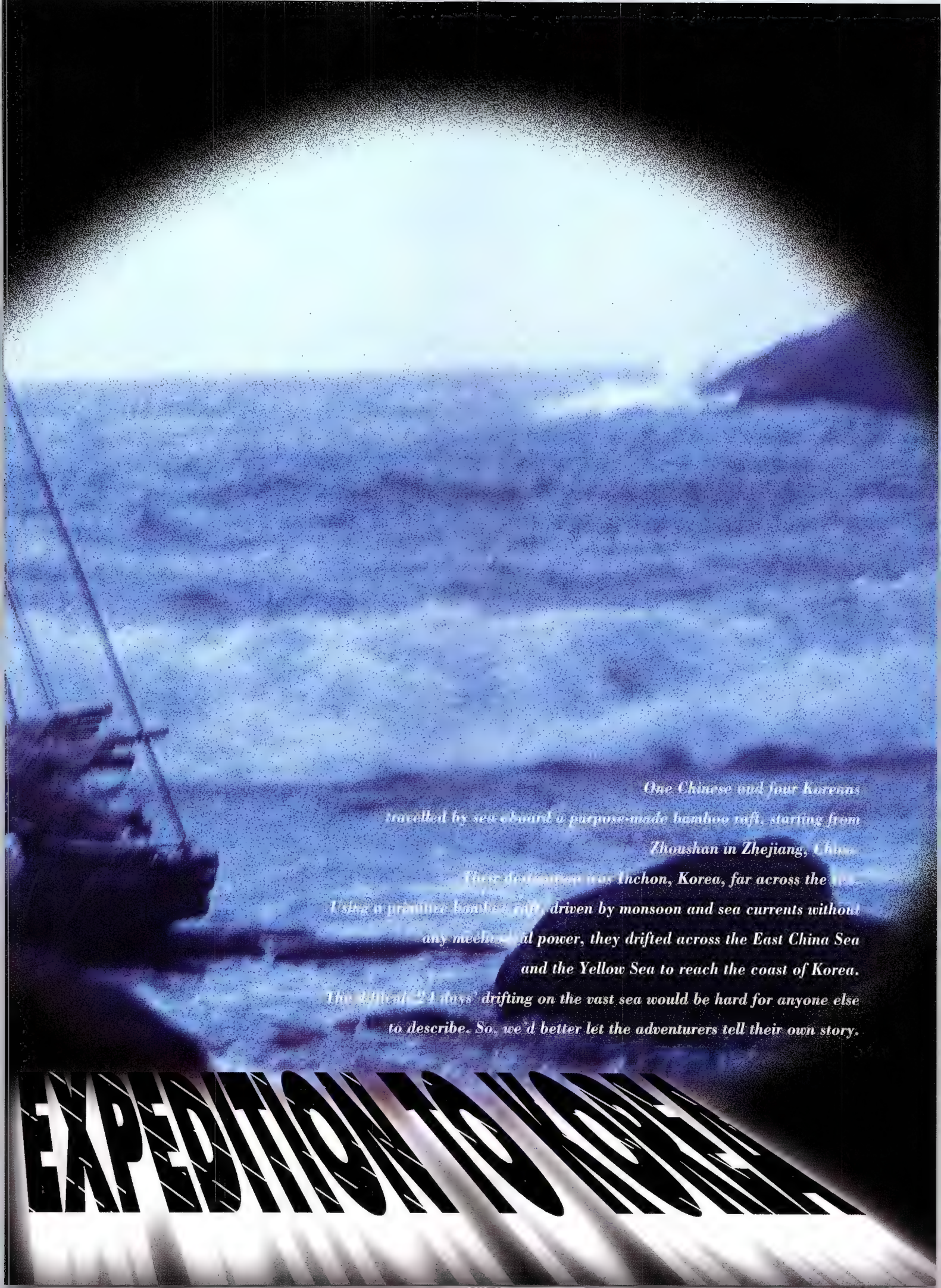
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C H A L L E N G E S

RAIBOO RAFT

Photos by Cai Changming, Wu Lianbao Article by Wu Jianbao



*One Chinese and four Koreans
travelled by sea aboard a purpose-made bamboo raft, starting from
Zhoushan in Zhejiang, China.*

*Their destination was Inchon, Korea, far across the sea.
Using a primitive bamboo raft, driven by monsoon and sea currents without
any mechanical power, they drifted across the East China Sea
and the Yellow Sea to reach the coast of Korea.
The difficult '24 days' drifting on the vast sea would be hard for anyone else
to describe. So, we'd better let the adventurers tell their own story.*

EXPEDITION



A Challenge to the Limits of Human Ability

by Yun Min Chel (Ph.D. of Arts, Director of the Korean Exploration Institute, Lecturer of Dong Guk University, and leader of the '96 and '97 Chinese-Korean Rafting Exploration Team)

SAILING FOR 24 DAYS.

In today's world, nearly a thousand people have succeeded in ascending the highest peak in the world – the Qomolangma – and many others have been to the North and South Poles. To travel from the east coast of China to the west coast of Korea takes only an hour by plane. But we gave ourselves the difficult assignment of following the example of our ancestors, crossing the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea by a bamboo raft. It took us 24 days to reach our destination.

A few years ago, Mr. Mao Zhaoxi, professor of history at Hangzhou University, made a speech entitled "The Origin of China's Rice Planting Culture and Its Introduction to the East" at an academic seminar held at Seoul University. He put forward the new viewpoint that rice planting culture was introduced into the Korean Peninsula from southeastern China across the sea. The Zhoushan Islands served as the "relay station" for this sea route, and the main means of transportation was bamboo or wooden rafts. His speech stimulated new ideas among Korean scholars, and inspired me as well.



DRIFTING WITHIN CHINA

At the setting off ceremony, we were asked by reporters to talk about our views of the sea. Frankly, rafting expedition members seldom talk about the sea. To me, the sea is just like a big gate, through which we can reach the world and the world will also reach us. The Chinese team member, Wu Lianbao, said: "The sea is like my mother." Kin Song Chi said, "The sea is the most beautiful, and also the most ferocious."

We named our bamboo raft *East Asian Mediterranean* because the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea were called "Mediterranean" in ancient times. On July 22, 1996, We began our expedition on a bamboo raft from Zhujiajian in the Zhoushan Islands of Zhejiang Province. Everything was OK for the first five days, and on the 27th we drifted to a place 140 kilometres from Big Black Hill Island. We thought that we would arrive at our destination, Inchon, in a week. Then, on that day, the No. 8 typhoon signal was raised, and we were blown back to China. The "Chinese-Korean Drifting" became a "Drifting Within China". We landed on Shidao Island in Shandong Province on August

6. For 16 days, sailing 1,200 kilometres, we had been searching for an ancient navigation route. But we did not succeed that time and had to wait for another chance.

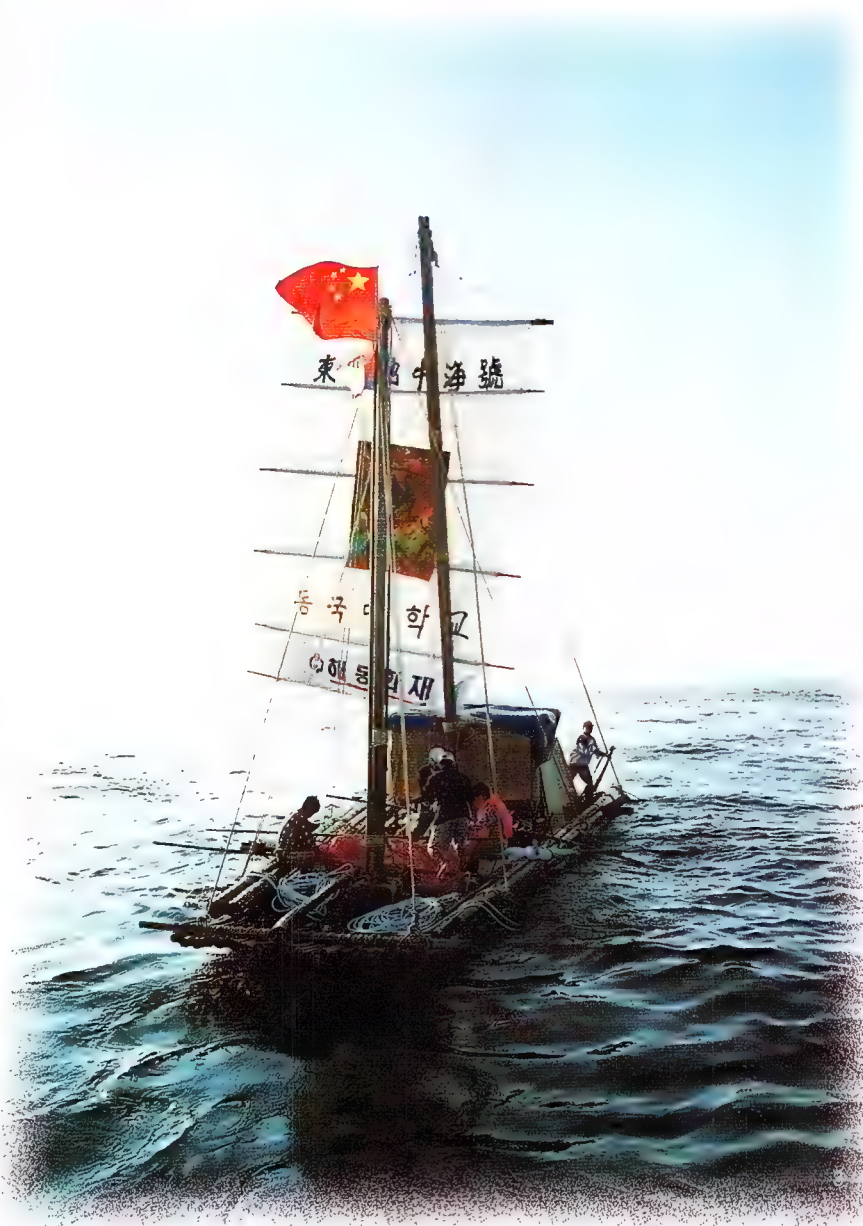
A Battle-Like Expedition

by Jin Jianren (Vice Director and Professor of the Institute of Korean Studies of Hangzhou University, and organiser of the '96 and '97 Chinese-Korean Rafting Expedition)

SEEING OFF THE *EAST ASIAN MEDITERRANEAN*

On June 15, 1997 a grand ceremony was held for the expedition. At 11:30 a.m., I got on board of a border-defence gunboat, which towed the bamboo raft *East Asian Mediterranean* out of the harbour. Chinese team member Wu Lianbao was standing on top of the small wooden cabin, transmitting the flag signal "How are you, motherland!" The people seeing off them on the beach of Zhujiajian extended their arms upward to form a "V" to wish these brave men success.

The *East Asian Mediterranean* measured 10 metres long and five metres wide and weighed 2,500 kilograms. It was made of 80 thick bamboo poles. A small wooden cabin was built on the raft for storing food, water and other materials and for the members to rest.



LOSING CONTACT FOR 12 DAYS

Organising a transnational expedition is just like commanding a battle. There were endless things to prepare and to worry about. Before setting out, we worried that the relevant department might

not approve the expedition, that we might not be able to collect enough funds, that we might not be able to set out before the monsoon came.....

The expedition team was to set out on June 15, but Wu Lianbao's visa was not issued until the evening of June 13, in Shanghai. It had to be delivered to him by special courier.

In the first five days, neither we nor those on the Korean side succeeded in making contact with the expedition team, but we did not worry because we had agreed that they would not turn on the transmitter during the first few days if there was nothing urgent – to save on the battery. We began to worry about them a week

later. Wu Lianbao's wife was always on tenterhooks. Without any news for a week, she could not wait any longer, and telephoned me repeatedly. She lost 10 kilograms within 12 days.

On the ninth day, June 23, Yun Min Chel's wife phoned me, asking if there was any news about the expedition team. On June 24, Kin Run Chi, chief of the general affairs office of Dong Guk University, called me time and again to ask about the expedition team at sea. The next day, Kin Run Chi told us that the Korean side had decided to broadcast through the KBS radio station to look for any traces of the expedition team and ask for the help of the Korean

Previous page: The adventure at Big Black Hill Island (by Wu Lianbao)

1. Erecting the mast of the bamboo raft (by Cai Mingchang)
2. The five adventurers (by Cai Mingchang)
3. Sailing to the sea (by Cai Mingchang)

Navy. We also released news in the *People's Daily*, *Yangcheng Evening Post*, *Qianjiang Evening Post* and *Hangzhou Daily*, and broadcast through provincial and city TV stations, making known to the audience the team's radio frequency and the time for communication.

According to original plan, the expedition team should have already reached Big Black Hill Islands, and they should have contacted the



Chinese or Korean organisers. But there was no news at all. Possible explanations were that the team's radio was out of order, or that they had gone off course. Though we kept calling them since June 23, there was no reply. On June 26, we discussed with Dong Guk University and decided that the searching should be carried out through three channels: first, the foreign affairs departments of the cities and counties along the coast of Shandong and Liaoning provinces; second, asking for help from the border army along the coast; and third, through the fishery departments of the two provinces.

At 9:00 a.m. on June 27, we received a call from Kin Run Chi of Dong Guk University, saying: "Good news! We have found the team!"

Jumping into the Sea

by Wu Lianbao (Chinese team member, manager of the engineering department of an underwater operation company and a veteran of Chinese Navy)

CHOI RUNG KEN LOST HIS LITTLE FINGER

I can hold my breath under water for three minutes and 35 seconds, and won a first prize in the navy's 10,000-metre armed

swim. After leaving the navy, I have worked as a diver for a dozen years, doing underwater engineering operations or deep-water salvage. I have rescued 12 lives, and retrieved more than 60 corpses.

This time, our leader, Yun, asked me to take charge of communications and weather conditions. After arriving at Chengshan from Dongfushan on June 16, the wind direction was not right. We waited at Chengshan for three days. On the 20th, we could not wait any longer but resumed sailing. The wind started to blow in the right direction only in the afternoon, so we decided to continue sailing through the night. On the afternoon of the 21st, when Choi Rung Ken was on duty, a big wave surged over him, and the helm, with his little finger crooked around it, got squeezed in the threading rod. He tried to get out of it but found the finger missing, leaving only a piece of skin attached. He screamed in great pain. Pak Jun Bin and I gripped his hand, trying to stop the bleeding, and bound up the wound. Only after taking a pain-killer pill did he feel better.

The wooden cabin was so small that we could not lie down to sleep, but had to sit up. Choi Rung Ken screamed with pain every time he had to balance himself by propping himself up with his left hand when the strong waves made the raft rock hard.

To save on the battery, we did not turn the radio on for the first five days. Only when we tried to communicate with the base did we find that the radio was wet and refused to work. We had to dry the radio under the sun. For a few days we could not communicate with the base no matter how hard we shouted into the microphone. We all knew that we had lost contact with the base, and felt overshadowed by a bad omen.

A LEAF FLOATING ON THE SEA

We took on duty in turn, two hours each, but Choi was hurt and Pak could not swim, leaving only us three. At midnight on June 24, when I was on duty, the wind was blowing very hard, and the raft was surging up and down in the waves, like a leaf floating aimlessly on the vast sea. I felt an uncontrollable loneliness. The wind was blowing even harder and had torn our sail. The tattered cloth was fluttering sadly in the wind. I felt bitter cold, with my teeth chattering, though I had put on all the clothes that I had brought with me – which had never been thoroughly dry since we had come on board. When the raft was made in Zhujiajian, I was absent for two days. I had the feeling that they had not fastened the raft tightly enough, and it had been loosened in the storm. If one part of the rope was broken, the raft would certainly fall apart in such a big storm. I did not dare to think more. Only the dim light at the top of the mast gave me slight warmth. The light was a warning to other vessels passing by.

When my shift was over, I returned to the small cabin to rest. We were waked up by a sudden scream from Kin Song Chi, who was on duty after me. We all rushed out to see a motored fishing boat passing by, having almost turned us over. Kin must have been dozing off.



3

HEARING MY NAME BEING CALLED

Between 6:00 and 7:00 on the morning of June 25, Yun turned on the radio and shouted into it again. Suddenly, I heard my name being called: "Wu Lianbao, Wu Lianbao." I replied immediately, "I hear you!" But the sound faded away, engulfed by the waves. I was moved to tears as I heard my name being called on the vast sea. I was cared about by others! I thought that my wife must be very worried, and that every day my home would be packed with relatives and friends coming to ask about me. Mr. Jin and others of the Institute of Korean Studies of Hangzhou University must also be very worried.

A SHARK'S FIN ON THE WATER

I did not know Korean, and they could not speak Chinese, only Yun knew some Chinese characters. When I communicated with the four

Korean members, the words we used most frequently were "OK" and "no". Pak was in charge of cooking. He put too little rice, and I made gestures to tell him that it was not enough for me. I did not know whether he really did not understand or just pretended not to, but I ate all the rice by myself, and he had to cook another pot. After that, he showed me the amount of rice before

cooking, and I ate half of it. I made gestures on my stomach to show whether I had had enough: an outward curve meant "full" and an inward curve meant "hungry".

The small bamboo raft was completely covered with water and moss. It was very slippery, so we had to be very careful. We had to fasten a safety belt when we went to relieve ourselves. If any of us fell into the sea, no one except me could catch up with the raft in the big waves. It was very dangerous to make water at night. If one fell into the water, no one could hear his cry. One day, I was relieving myself when a shark's fin appeared above the water. I was so scared that I did not dare to relieve myself for a whole day.

ALL NAKED TO SUN THE BODY

The most difficult to endure was lack of fresh water. Our leader Yun seemed very mean at distributing fresh water. He was afraid that our raft would be blown to the high sea. Our plastic containers were filled with tap water at Zhujiajian, and the water became rotten in a week. Some even grew mildew. Leader Yun even asked Pak to save on this kind of water for cooking. One day when I saw there was only little water left at the bottom of the container, I made gestures to Yun to ask for a cup of water to take a "bath", but he simply shook his head and said "No, no." Instead, he asked Pak to settle it for a while and use the water in cooking. A week passed and I could not endure it anymore, so I poured a little of my portion of drinking water on my towel and wiped myself from head to feet. This made me feel better.



1. A shark's fin is seen on the water. (by Yun Min Chel)
2. Yun Min Chel, the team leader, wielding a knife at the shark (by Wu Lianbao)
3. Braving the waves (by Wu Lianbao)
4. Pak Jun Bin, one of the Korean team members (by Cai Mingchang)

The soaked clothes were hard to dry up even in the sun, and they stuck to our skin. In the sunny day, we took off all our clothes, becoming naked without a stitch on, and were sunned in the sun like dried fish. Salt became easier to wipe out when being dried. But, even so, our skin had been infected. Kin Soon Chi was the most seriously affected and red flesh could be seen between his legs. As I had brought many pairs of underwear for change, and also put some napkins inside to absorb water, I was in the best condition among all of us.

FISH JUMPING ONTO OUR RAFT

On June 27, we, by chance, connected to a radio ham of Inchon. Yun told him our condition and asked him to inform Dong Guk University. After 12 days, we finally resumed our communication with the base. We all hailed, and loneliness was gone. As if the King of the Sea also gave us his congratulation, a 1.5-kilogram fish jumped onto our raft and we had a nice meal.

According to the satellite locating meter, we knew that we were only 90 kilometres away from the Big Black Hill Island. But it took us five days to cover the 90 kilometres. During the last year's Chinese-Korean drifting expedition, the team met with a No. 8 typhoon at the place 140 kilometres away from the Big Black Hill Island, and the raft was blown to the Shandong Peninsula. The expedition failed. To avoid typhoon this year, we started the drifting more than a month earlier, but we still met with a No. 8 typhoon near the Big Black Hill Island and the date was also June 27.

Our raft was blown towards China for two days, and we could begin to sail toward Korea again only on the 29th. The map showed that we had actually sailed in a circle with a diameter of 40 kilometres. In the evening of June 29, we finally saw the Big Black Hill Island.

The next evening, the four Koreans congratulated me on the return of Hong Kong to China, and we all hailed for the coming landing on the Big Black Hill Island the following day. This meant that we had left China and would soon land on Korea to complete the expedition.



If I Did Not Jump INTO THE WATER...

The storm was very powerful that night. At five o'clock in the morning of July 1, I came out of the cabin and found that the raft was moving away by the storm. It was heading toward a reef. I shouted "danger" and rushed into the cabin. I wrote the Chinese characters "danger" for Yun and dragged him out. Yun was also very surprised to see the situation and gave order to others. Some quickly rowed, others tried to guide the raft away from the reef, all putting on life jackets. Yun looked around and said that if someone could swim to the small island with a rope and tie it on a rock, others could pull the rope to draw the raft away from the reef and get close to the beach. Choi was hurt, Pak could not swim. If I did not go, all of us would be buried in the sea.

I put on a life buoy and jumped into the water. The sea was surging and I found it very difficult to swim to the shore. A wave, about three metres high, stroke me to the bottom of the water and then shoved me into a crevice on the shore. I grasped a rock with my hands, but my foot got stuck between rocks. Another wave submerged me, and I could not get out of it. After the wave was gone, I breathed again. Yun and others thought I was dead. Finally I got my foot out of the rock crevice and climbed up to a cliff of a hundred metres high. Before I reached its top, the rope came to its end. One end of the ropes was tied around my waist and the other was held by Yun. The hundreds-meter-long rope was swinging in the air. I cried in my heart: Mr. Yun, if you do not loose the rope, I'll be pulled down from the cliff. I later learned that when the rope came to the end, Kin added to it immediately with the rope from the sail. That is why I was able to climb up to the top and tied the rope to a pine tree. All those on the raft pulled the rope hard to move the raft close to the small island. Yun said later, "Without Wu Lianbao, we would all have been buried in the sea."

THE RAFT BEING BLOWN AWAY

We moved all our belongings to the shore, and then looked for the path to the Big Black Hill Island. We searched in the primeval forest for nearly three hours but could not find any road leading to the outside. We had to return to the shore. Kin was the most miserable. He felt so

much pain that he could not even walk on the raft. The wounds between his legs had been seriously infected and were bleeding .

We set a bonfire on the beach, waiting for daybreak. We were enveloped by mosquitoes. At midnight, the wind and wave became stronger and finally broke the rope and blew away our raft to the sea. Yun was very upset and asked for a cigarette from me, though he had never smoked.

On the morning of July 2, Kin Run Chi of the Dong Guk University and three correspondents of KBS TV Station came to us by boat. After a day's rest, on July 4, we started for Incheon.

WISHING TO TAKE A FRESH-WATER BATH

On the way from the Big Black Hill Island to Incheon are numerous isles and many passing-by vessels. It was easy to ask for fresh water or food from other vessels. We had suffered greatly for more than 20 days drifting on the sea. Our skin had peeled more than once from body and face. Now what we wanted most was to soak ourselves in the fresh water, and then to have a sleep in a warm bed, even only for a few hours. At 5:00 p.m. on July 8, we finally reached the Maritime Police Dock of Incheon. On the following day, a welcoming ceremony



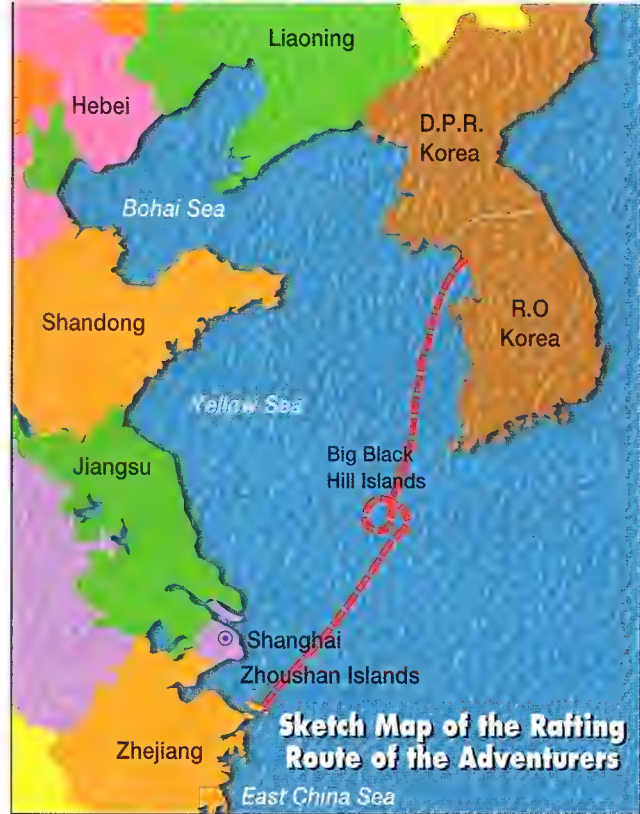
was held on the dock by Dong Guk University and Incheon City.

A Conversation with the Remote Past

by Jin Jianren

The Chinese-Korean Drifting Expedition which lasted for 24 days has come to an end. From Zhoushan to Incheon, the distance is 1,150 kilometres as the crow flies but the team had actually travelled more than 1,500 kilometres.

There are many stone tombs of the late New Stone Age and Bronze Age in Korea, of which the Southern Type were also found in China's Zhejiang Province. The fact that the same type of tombs have been found in both China and Korea indicates that there might be some connections between the two countries over the sea 4,000 years ago. We organised Chinese-Korean Sea



Drifting Expeditions jointly with the Korean Expedition Association and Dong Guk University to find out when the southern part of China started to have contacts with Korea. The success of this drifting expedition shows that the ancient people had started sea navigation by bamboo or wooden rafts between China and Korea even before they mastered the skill to build boats. This not only provides a new understanding of the history of the Chinese-Korean relationship over the sea, but has helped explore some mysteries such as the distribution of stone tombs, the spread of rice planting culture and international migration.

Translated by M.Q.

1. A 1.5-kilogram fish jumped onto the raft, providing a good meal. (by Wu Lianbao)
2. This light is to be hung on top of the mast as a warning to vessels passing by. (by Wu Lianbao)
3. Yun Min Chel's wife and daughter smile happily when they see the team arrive in Incheon. (by Wu Lianbao)
4. A photo of the team members taken with people welcoming them in Incheon (by Kin Run Chi)



SPECIAL TOURS

SILK ROAD EXPRESS

— TRAVELLING ALONG THE SILK ROAD BY TRAIN

Photos & Article by Wu Guanping and Lu Junde



**ANOTHER TRIP TO THE SILK ROAD? YES.
HOWEVER, IT IS NOT BY BUS OR PLANE, BUT
BY TRAIN — THE SILK ROAD EXPRESS.**

Note of the Editor: It is a brand-new tourist programme. By taking the Silk Road Express, one can visit spots of interest during the day and sleep on the train at night, which saves both time and energy of the traveller. This report is based on the trip of 108 tourists from the mainland of China, Taiwan and Singapore, who started from Lanzhou and travelled 2,000 kilometres to arrive in Ürümqi.



1. Full speed ahead! The Silk Road Express running past Jiayuguan Pass (by Lu Junde)
2. Rush out for a look at the Yellow River (by Lu Junde)
3. The dining car (by Wu Pingguan)
4. The bar coach (by Wu Pingguan)



Travelling Through the Gobi Desert at a Cold Night

Just as the train left Lanzhou, the unique landscape of the Loess Plateau immediately aroused the tourists' great interest. "Look, the Yellow River!" "Did you see that mountain?" Everyone turned his or her eyes to the scene. Our Taiwan friends were even more excited. They all stepped out of their compartments to have a look at the land of yellow earth, which they had only learned of in textbooks.



After supper, people came to the bar carriage in twos or threes. Someone began to play piano amidst the rumbling sound of train wheels. The rest enjoyed themselves in what they liked, some playing cards or mahjong, others singing karaoke.

We suddenly felt a blast of cold wind. The train attendant told us that the train had passed Wushao Ridge and entered the Gobi Desert, where the temperature could fall very low at night. We put on all the clothes we had brought with us, yet they were hardly enough to ward off the cold. We had to halt our party in the bar carriage, and went back to the cabins for the night.



As one four-bed soft sleeper compartment only held two people, the cabin appeared to be spacious. Adding a blanket and a towel coverlet over our padded quilts to keep ourselves warm, my friend and I soon fell sound asleep. But, in less than half an hour we were both awake from the severe cold. It was already midnight. With the aid of the feeble light outside the train, we could see that it was drizzling, but could not tell if it was rain or snow.



Touring Jiuquan and Climbing Jiayuguan Pass

Shortly after breakfast, the train stopped at Jiuquan Station. The morning sun bathed the Qilian Mountains in a bright red light, giving them an extremely charming appearance.

We visited the Jiuquan Park first. We walked along a corridor of grapevines and came upon a tablet erected during the Xuantong reign of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), upon which were carved the characters: "Jiuquan Wonder of Western Han Dynasty". Behind the tablet was a clear spring which has a history of more than 2,000 years. The water gurgles all the way and joins a pool, which is divided into two halves by a bridge built in the middle. One particularly magnificent tree is marked "Willow of the Revered Mr. Zuo" (Zuo Zongtang, a high-ranking official in the Qing Dynasty who made great contributions to maintaining national unity and to the defence of Northwest China). Many in our group had their snapshots taken in front of this tree.

Having visited the Jiuquan Luminous Wine Cup Factory as well as the Bell and Drum Towers, we rode to the Great Wall Hotel in Jiayuguan City where we were going to stay for the night. We visited Jiayuguan Pass in the afternoon. On the top of the tower, our vision suddenly broadened. It was already deep autumn; trees and grass had both turned yellow. Yet, the sun in the sky bathed the land in comfortable warmth. Looking into the distance, one could see the rumbling Mazong Mountain to the north, the snow-covered Qilian Mountains to the south, the endless Gobi Desert to the west, and a huge steel works bustling with activity to the east.



1. The Jiayuguan Pass (by Xie Guanghui)
2. Picking a luminous wine glass (by Xie Guanghui)
3. Learning Yangge Dance (by Lu Junde)
4. Playing Silk Road merchants (by Lu Junde)
5. Passengers receiving their certificate (by Lu Junde)
6. A birthday kiss (by Lu Junde)



The Yangge Dance Carnival

Together with most of the tourists we went into the streets to buy more clothes after supper for fear that the weather might turn cold again. Just as we were back in the hotel, the sound of the suona (a traditional brass musical instrument) was heard. Our guide told us that the Elderly People's Yangge Team of the Jiuquan Iron and Steel Works had come to offer a performance to their guests.

In the courtyard of the hotel, more than 30 elderly dancers, wearing colourful costumes and holding beautiful fans or ribbons, danced enthusiastically in the accompaniment of the suona. The hospitality of the Jiayuguan people moved us tourists. One by one, we put away our new purchases and joined in the yangge dancing. Soon, the courtyard became very crowded.

Riding a Camel After Climbing the Sand Dunes

Early next morning, we re-boarded the Silk Road Express. By noontime, the train reached Liuyuan Station in Gansu Province. There, we changed for a bus for the 140-kilometre trip south to visit the world-famous Dunhuang Grottoes.

Liuyuan, at the western border of Gansu is only 180 kilometres from Xinjiang. Here, numerous black hills link together. In the gullies between the hills grow lush achnatherum, which turns bright yellow in sunlight.

After we checked into a hotel in Dunhuang, we immediately went to Mingshashan (Humming Sand Dunes). There, we found it a great fun to ride camels on the soft sand to admire the unique scenery described in a famous ancient poem which reads, "Lonely smoke rises straight on the vast desert, while the round setting sun falls into the long river." It is great enjoyment to see with your own eyes the sunset scene in the desert, to listen to the camel bells and to feel the autumn zephyr. At dusk, the falling sun added a brighter golden colour to the sand dunes, making them look like a sea of gold. We rode around the Moon Spring and along the sand ridges. It was time to return to the hotel. But the travellers from Taiwan felt they had not yet had enough riding. They asked the master of the camel herd to let them ride the camels back to the hotel.

It was supper time. Fresh and tender lamb was placed on the table; long and thin *latiaozi* (noodles made by



hand) were placed into boiling water; and the famous stewed camel's foot was ready. It was just then that the three camel-riders entered.

After supper, our friends from Singapore suggested that we should go to a night market. The night scene in Dunhuang was indeed beautiful. Moreover, it was not as cold as in Jiayuguan. Numerous stalls spread in two lines along the street, offering various sorts of souvenirs. Inside a gorgeously decorated gate there was a food market offering various Gansu delicacies and snacks. We found a tea stand and tried the local flavoured *sanpaotai* tea. While sipping our tea, we chatted about the interesting things along the Silk Road, feeling reluctant to leave until it was very late.

A Birthday Party on the Train

Returning from Dunhuang to Liuyuan by bus, we were again on board the Silk Road Express to continue our westward journey to Xinjiang. When the train entered the boundaries of Xinjiang, it was dark and our "night life" on the Silk Road Express began again.

The brightly lit bar carriage echoed with music and laughter. As it was the tourists' last night on the train, Mr. Sun Lishan, head of the crew, presented each of us the Certificate for Silk Road Express Passenger and some other souvenirs.

It happened to be Mr. Chen Qiujin's 55th birthday that day. Just as his wife was thinking about how to celebrate this, someone in the group suddenly shouted, "It is Mr. Chen's birthday today. Let's wish him a happy birthday!" Meanwhile, a birthday cake was taken out from the kitchen and the candles were lit. After Mr. Chen blew out the candles, Mrs. Chen was asked to give her husband a kiss.

On the morning of the fifth day, we finally arrived at Daheyan Railway Station, the westernmost terminal of the Silk Road Express. There, the tourists would change for a bus to visit Turpan. From there they would go to Ürümqi and visit the Tianshan Mountains. My friend and I decided to take the train back to Lanzhou.



1. At the night market in Dunhuang (by Lu Junde)
2. In the footsteps of the long gone Silk Road merchants (by Xie Guanhui)
3. A group photo in Zhangye (by Wu Pingguan)

Translated by Li Zhenguo

ABOUT THE SILK ROAD EXPRESS

The Silk Road Express runs between Lanzhou and Ürümqi from April to November.

Ticket Office:

Lanzhou Railway International Travel Service

Address: 99 Hezheng Road (East), Lanzhou

Tel.: (931) 8816004

Fax: (931) 8411354

Route:

- Day 1: Board Silk Road Express at Lanzhou for Jiuquan; Lodge on the train for a night.
- Day 2: Tour Jiuquan in the morning and Jiayuguan Pass in the afternoon; stay overnight at the Great Wall Hotel at Jiayuguan
- Day 3: Board the Silk Road Express in the morning for Liuyuan; tour Humming Sand Dunes in the afternoon; stay at a hotel in Dunhuang.
- Day 4: Visit the Mogao Grottoes, museums and a carpet factory in the morning; board the Silk Road Express for Xinjiang; stay overnight on the train.
- Day 5: Arrive at the rail terminus, Daheyan Station, in the morning; tour scenic spots in Turpan and Ürümqi.
- Day 6: Return by air

Features:

1. All the historic and scenic spots along the Silk Road in China;
2. The local customs peculiar to northwestern China;
3. Local food such as Lanzhou beef noodles, camels' foot at Jiayuguan Pass, dates pickled in honey in Dunhuang and whole roast lamb in Xinjiang.
4. Local activities such as Uygurs' songs and dances in Turpan, horse race, etc.

絲路快車路線

Sketch Map of the Silk Road



Birch Bark Art Works



Photos by Xia Mingjing
Article by Zhi Lang



seems old and incomplete, but on closer examination, you will find the crackles are the scales of the fish, and the knots on the bark suggest the patterns of the little bird's feathers. Bark art works are characterised by their natural shapes and crudity. The cruder and older they look, the more value they have. And scarred, knotty birch barks that were discarded in the past have become something everyone wants to have. The little bark turtle with green moss on its

back, for example, has become a valuable piece of art work.

Birch tree twigs are also used to make various decorative objects. Craftsmen first turn them into various shapes, apply bark to them, and then cut them according to their

It sounds strange that birch barks are used as keepsakes for friends, and, the closer the friend, the cruder the bark.

The Greater Hinggan Mountains in Northeast China are covered by forests of white birch trees, which make the landscape beneath drifting white clouds into a beautiful picture. In the past, when tourists entered the forests of white birch trees, they would stealthily tear off a piece of bark for a keepsake. But it is no longer necessary to do that — the local people now make various kinds of art works from the bark.

Birch trees have white bark covered by specks of different shapes. This kind of bark contains elements of gum and resin, and although the bark is thin, it is very tenacious. The people of the Hezhen, Orqen

and Ewenki who live on fishing and hunting in the area began to use the bark in their daily lives in ancient times. They take the bark from trees in June and July — the barking season, during which birch trees contain a lot of water, and it is quite easy to get the bark off the trees. New birch bark, wet and soft, can be easily put to various decorative uses. Art works made from white birch bark look rather crude at first glance: the little bark fish is covered with crackles, and the little bird



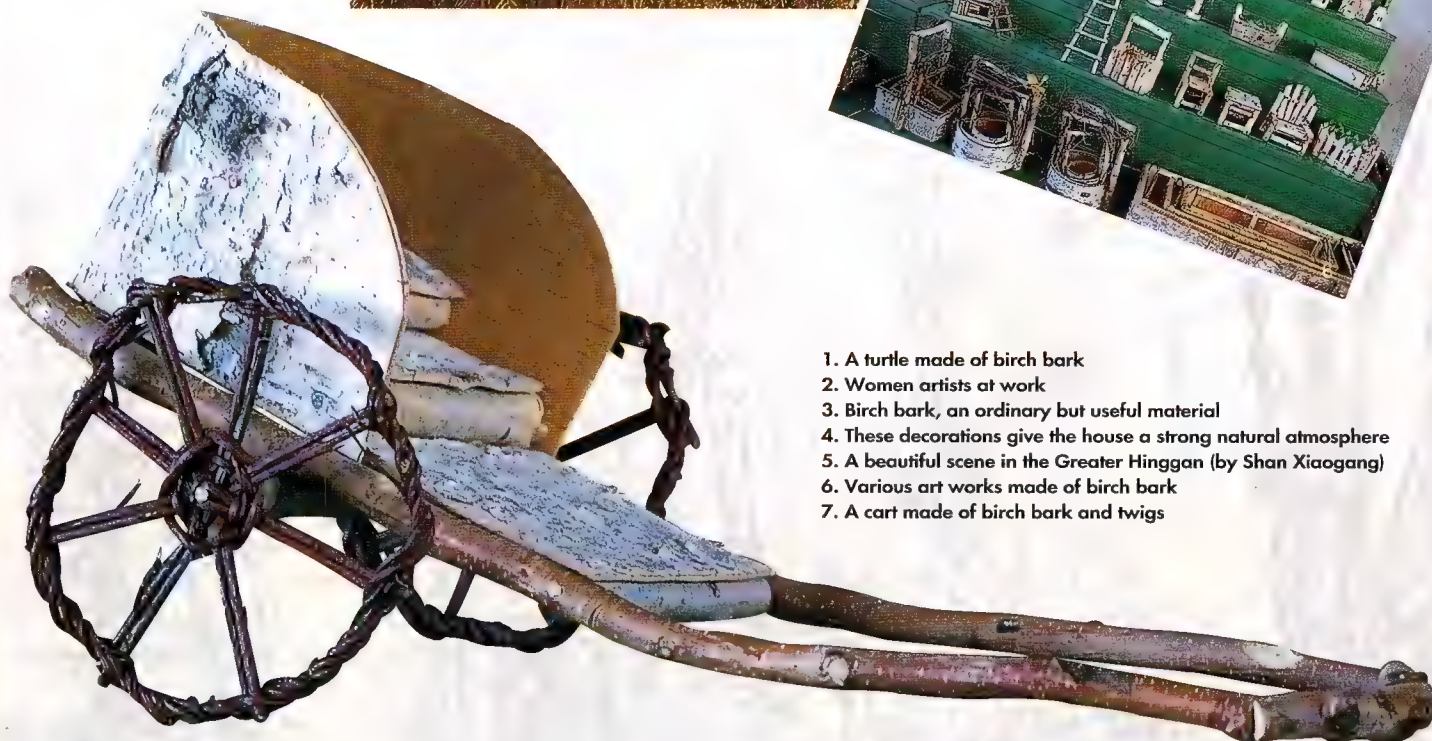


designs. In order to retain the original characteristics of the birch tree, the natural bends and turns of the branches are minutely utilised, and sewing with linen and cotton thread is adopted instead of using glue or nails. Then, various designs, including waves, clouds, or animals are cut onto the bark. In this way, a piece of art, natural and rustic in character, is produced. With new ideas introduced in recent years, birch bark art works have become more and more popular, and many foreign

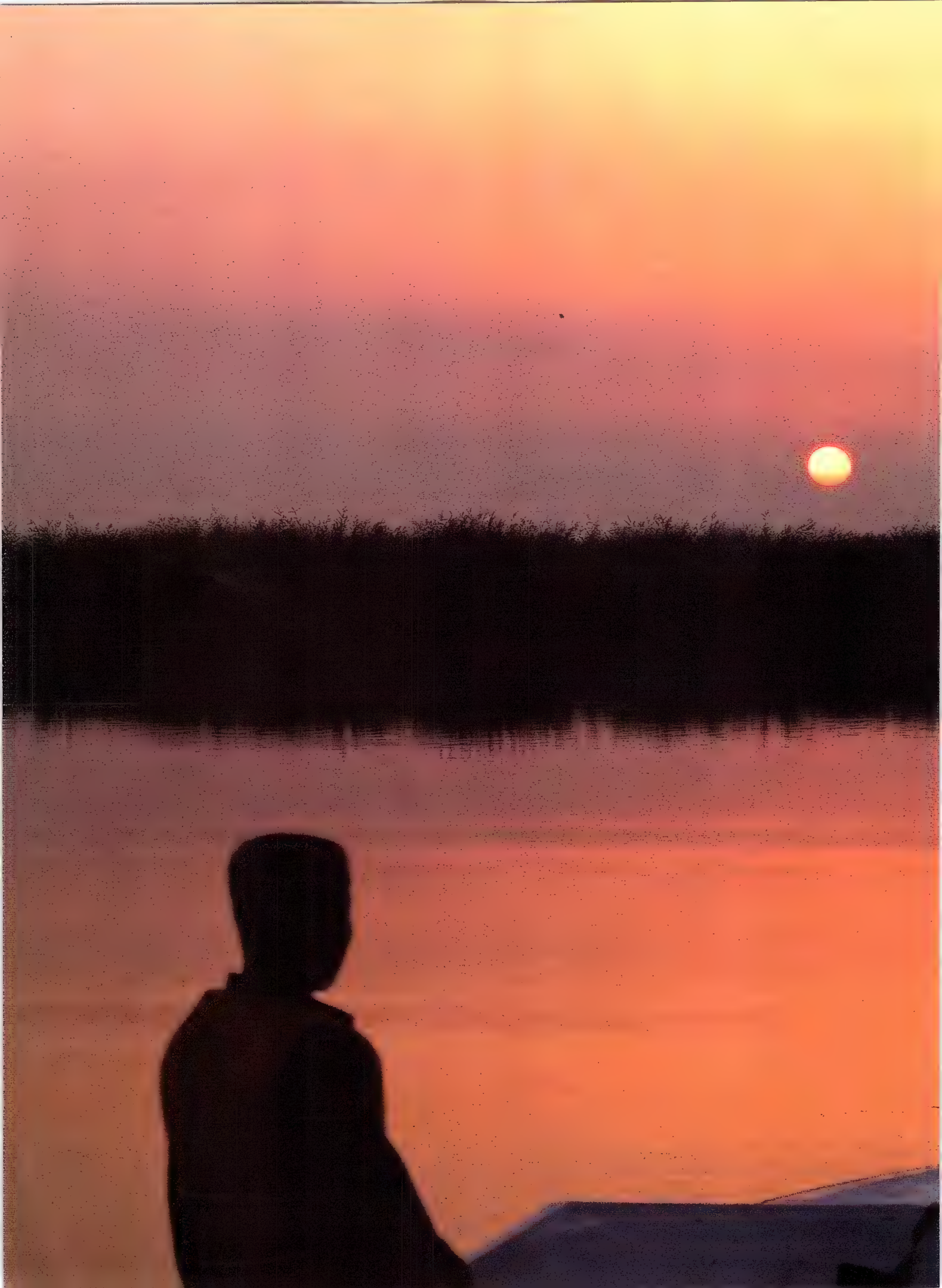


tourists buy them and take them home to hang on Christmas trees or on the wall as a decoration.

I think it is a good idea to buy a piece of bark art work for a close friend. Besides, tourists who have visited the Greater Hinggan Mountains would like to keep the clean and refreshing sight of the birch trees in their memory, and a piece of birch bark art will help them do so! Birch bark art is not expensive. An ordinary jewellery case or pencil-holder costs about 10 yuan, and a small Christmas tree decoration, only two or three yuan.



1. A turtle made of birch bark
2. Women artists at work
3. Birch bark, an ordinary but useful material
4. These decorations give the house a strong natural atmosphere
5. A beautiful scene in the Greater Hinggan (by Shan Xiaogang)
6. Various art works made of birch bark
7. A cart made of birch bark and twigs



L E I S U R E

Hasu

A Beautiful Lake Beyond the Great Wall

Photos & Article by Shan Xiaogang

On the vast Tumochuan Plain to the west of Hohhot,

the capital of Inner Mongolia,

lies a famous stretch of water known as

Hasu ("jade" in Mongolian) Lake.

Luxuriant reeds grow in the limpid water.

When wind sweeps the lake,

they swing rhythmically like dancing fairies.

Fishing boats returning home at dusk



One day in early August we visited this lake in the midst of vast grasslands. The lake was enveloped by mist, and this created a beautifully cool mini-climate insulating us from the searing mid-summer Mongolian heat elsewhere.

The motorboat we hired caused huge waves, breaking the water's placid surface. Soon we came across a large area of reeds which were a lush green under the dispersed sunlight. As the boat drove in this "reed forest" along narrow channels, we found the beauty of these tall rushes breathtaking. Meanwhile, the tranquillity of the green world seemed to have been broken. The noisy thuds of the motor startled a few birds, making them take flight on all sides of us.

Hordes of fish also tried to flee. They jumped out of the water and dived back, splashing water in all directions. It was too bad that we had to disturb all these creatures.

But as soon as we had passed, peace was restored behind us, the birds and fish returning to their usual activities. We stopped the boat for a while to observe the fish swimming. Suddenly, a black dipper bird emerged from the water near us. But when it discovered that several big eyes were all fixed on him, it quickly turned to dive back into the water. This was very funny to see!

When we emerged from the reeds, we saw several dozen log cabins with colourful roofs floating on the surface of the lake. Fixed

by anchors, these floating houses had curtains on the doors and windows. We left the boat and visited one of them. It was neatly furnished with tables, tea sets, beds, quilts... ideal for a holiday resort. Here you could wake up to the sound of birds singing and sometimes melodious music played on the reed-flute. In the evening, you could watch the sun sinking into the vast sea of rushes. During the day you could enjoy yourself fishing, horse riding or exploring. We were reluctant to leave such a beautiful place,





so we decided to stay for the night. On the shore, we saw a series of villas and yurts belonging to the Hasu Lake Resort. Various recreational facilities had also been built there.


The next morning, we went out on the lake again. The magnificent Grand North Hills were reflected in the mirror-like surface of the water. When the sun rose, its rays seemed to chase the dense clouds and mists across the lake from east to west. The reed marshes and log cabins were alternately obscured and revealed by the rolling cloud, as if they were part of a mirage.

When the mists dispersed, we saw that the lake was full of golden wild lotus flowers,



which glowed in the infant rays of sunshine. Ospreys stood on some of the lotus leaves, gazing far off, while white cranes on the shore held their heads proudly, and other, smaller birds swam to and fro in the water. Morning at Hasu Lake was enchanting. Under the morning sun, fishermen set out into the water. With a small boat and net, their fishing methods might remain primitive, but the catch was always good owing to the abundance of fish in the lake. We were told

that Hasu Lake produces 250,000 kilograms of fish annually. We later sampled some fish caught from the lake. It was delicious!

A visit to Hasu Lake is a delight to the senses and a rest for the soul. 

1. Living in a log cabin on the water
2. The holiday resort built by the lake
3. A tour on the lake by motorboat
4. The lake is so vast that while sailing on it you feel as if you were on the sea.



TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER:

• **Transport:** Hasu Lake is 73 kilometres from Hohhot and 81 kilometres from Baotou. It is about one hour's drive from either of them. During the tourist season from June to September special shuttle buses are available.

• **Costs:** The rate for a log cabin is 160-500 yuan per night. Motorboat hire: 90-130 yuan. Pleasant boats (for groups): 320 yuan. A dinner of fish dishes for 10 people costs 300-800 yuan, while a banquet of roasted whole lamb for 30 people costs 1,200 yuan.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

Location Map of Hasu Lake



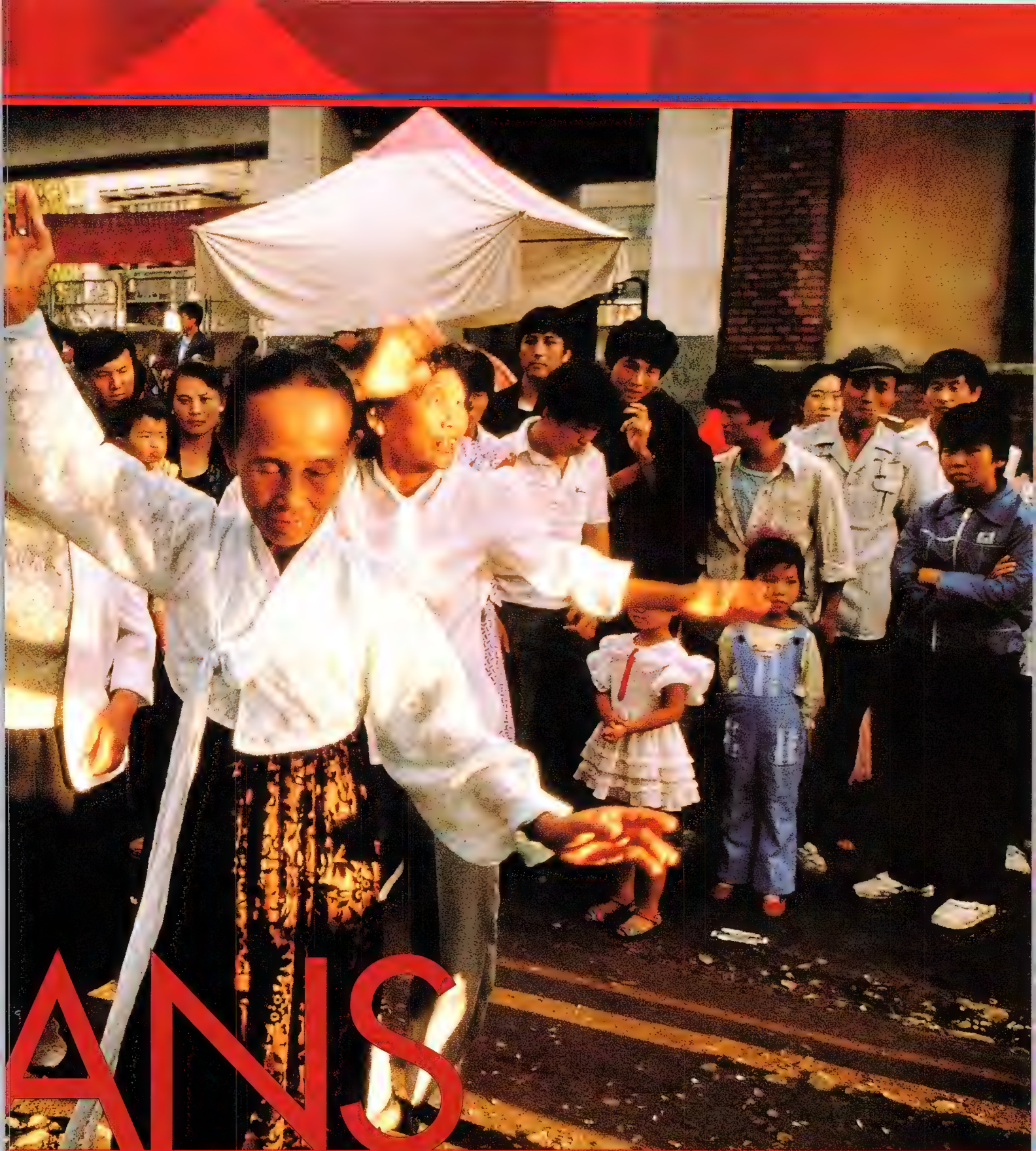
In late summer, the lake is covered with golden wild lotus flowers.

P E O P L E S



KORE

THE KOREANS IN THE NORTHEAST

A photograph of a man in a white shirt and patterned skirt performing a dance or ritual in front of a crowd. The man is in the foreground, with his arms raised and hands open. He is surrounded by a group of people, including children and adults, who are watching him. In the background, there is a white tent and a brick wall. The overall scene suggests a cultural or religious event.

ANS

Article by Iris Wong



The Koreans are an ethnic minority living mostly in Jilin Province as well as Heilongjiang and Liaoning provinces in Northeast China. About half of the total 2 million Chinese Koreans reside in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture established in 1952, including such cities as Yanji and Tumen, in southeastern Jilin. The Changbai Korean Autonomous County, founded in 1958 in the same province, has the second largest Korean community in the country.

The Koreans began to move into China from neighbouring Korea at the end of the 17th century. The year 1901 saw the largest influx of Koreans when Japan invaded their home country.

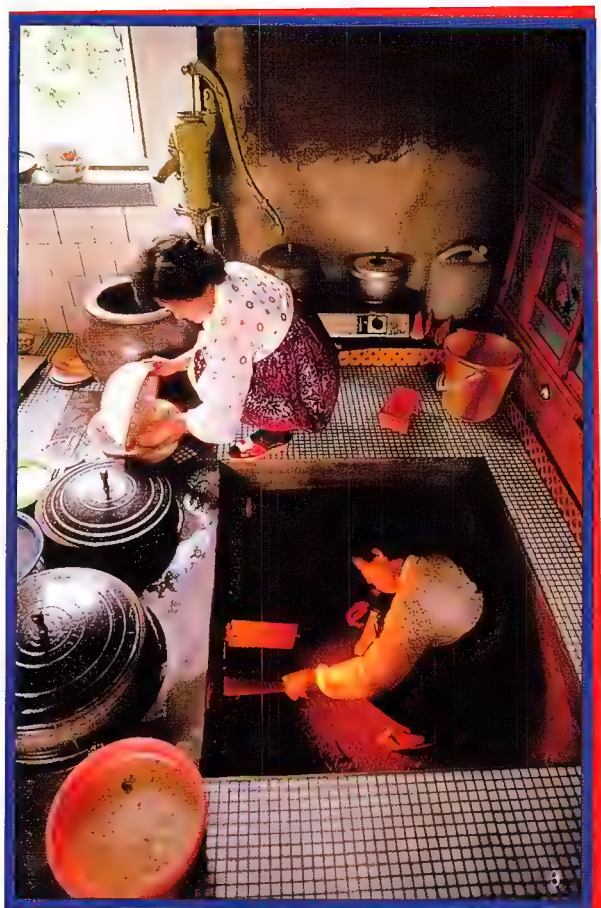
Lifestyles

Jilin Province lies in the hilly Changbai Mountain area, which is characterised by beautiful scenery and abundant natural resources. The large tracts of virgin forest make the place a major timber base for China. Yanbian, with 70 percent of its land covered by forest, produces a large amount of quality timber every year, such as Korean pine and white pine.

The rolling forests also yield a wide range of herbal medicines and indigenous local products, including ginseng, marten fur and pilose antler, which are known as the "three treasures", as well as plant resources for producing fibre, oil, perfume and dyestuffs. Deep in the forests reside the Northeastern tiger, deer and grey squirrel. Underground are reserves of copper, tin, zinc, iron, antimony, phosphorus, graphite, quartz and limestone.

In terms of agriculture, the region inhabited by Koreans is a famous rice producer in northern China as well as a major tobacco production base. Fruits are also in abundance here.

In recent years, the industrial sector, including non-ferrous metals, coal, power, agricultural machinery, chemical fertilizer, paper and cement manufacturing, has seen a rapid development in this region.



Costumes

The Koreans are known as "a people of plain apparel" as they love to wear plain-coloured clothes: the Korean woman usually wears a short jacket and a long skirt. The jacket is buttoned with long ribbon knots on the side, while the skirt has many pleats at the waist. In fact, Korean skirts, both in bucket shape or wrapping-up style, include both long and short categories, with the former reaching the feet and the latter below the knee. Women favour boat-shaped rubber shoes. The Korean man usually has a vest on top of the shirt and wears a pair of very broad pants. For more formal occasions, he puts on a long robe with cloth buttons on the side.

Food

The Koreans love to eat pickled vegetables such as cabbage and turnips

which are seasoned with such spicy ingredients as garlic, hot chilli and ginger. Special Korean food also includes rice cakes, cold noodles and soup made with soy paste sauce. Their particular favourite is dog meat.

Dwellings

Korean houses are likely to be found on the flat land at the foot of hills. Their villages, usually consisting of one or several dozen households, are one to three kilometres apart from each other. The houses, with either a tile or thatched roof, normally open to the south, southeast or southwest. Instead of having a courtyard, they face open ground. The roof consists of four sloping parts, one on each side. Each house has a horizontally three-part or four-part door. A typical house includes bedrooms, the living room, a kitchen and a storeroom. The walls are usually pure white. Interestingly, bricks or stone slabs are used to build heated beds that occupy most of the space in the houses. When people enter the house, they take off their shoes and sit on the heated brick or stone beds.

Marriage

Korean people observe monogamy in marriage. In the past, parents arranged marriages for their children. The custom then was to marry early, so that boys got married at the age of 12 or 13, and girls at 13 or 14. Sometimes, families had child-brides or bridegrooms. In rural areas, once married, women had no right to ask for divorce, nor could widows marry again.

Previous page: Koreans in Yanbian, Jilin Province (by Chan Yat Nin)

1. Traditional Korean costumes are still the fashion among young women in Yanbian. (by Chan Yat Nin)

2. The Mask Dance, loved by Koreans (by Li Ken Ai)

3. The kitchen in a Korean house (by Chan Yat Nin)

4. Rice cakes – a special delicacy of the Koreans (by Chan Yat Nin)





The Koreans have a high regard for matchmakers. Even when two families agree of their own accord to marry their children to each other and therefore do not need a matchmaker, they still have to arrange a symbolic go-between, usually a veteran respected in the village. When the parents on both sides have agreed to the match, the young man's father and mother will go and visit the girl at her home. Then the man's family makes a formal proposal. Once they have received the agreement, they will provide information on the young man's time and date of birth and other related information considered necessary for the match. Then the girl's family will do the calculation to decide if the two young people were born at the right time and on the right date to match each other.

Their weddings show a strong influence of ancient marriage rituals of the Han people – the six procedures. Once it is agreed that the information indicates that the young man and woman will be a good match, the man's family will send gifts to the girl's family as a proposal for the marriage. Second, the young man's family will ask for the girl's time and date of birth. Third, the selection of the lucky day for the engagement is made and followed by the young man's family taking gifts and a document of marriage to the girl's home. The fifth step is to pick the wedding day. Finally, the girl is brought to the man's home. The wedding day is a time of great merry-making when relatives and friends gather together. With the modernisation of society, however, these complicated procedures have been simplified.

Language

The Koreans have their own language and script. Written Korean, which was first created in the 15th century, now has 40 phonemic symbols. The phonemic symbols are arranged together to form Korean words.

Festivals and religion

Apart from the most important festivals such as the Spring Festival, the Clear and Bright Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, there are also family festivals such as the one-year anniversary of the birth of a child, when guests are invited to celebrate the first birthday; the sixtieth birthday celebration; and the sixtieth wedding anniversary. On the latter two days, children, relatives and neighbours all come to congratulate the old people and wish them a happy and long life.



In areas inhabited by Koreans, there is both Christianity and Confucianism, and in the latter case, people revere Confucius and Mencius. Obviously, this is more a religion of the old people.

Taboos

In the past when a senior family member died, his or her relatives were forbidden to wash their face, have a haircut or eat rice for three days. Besides, they would have to wear

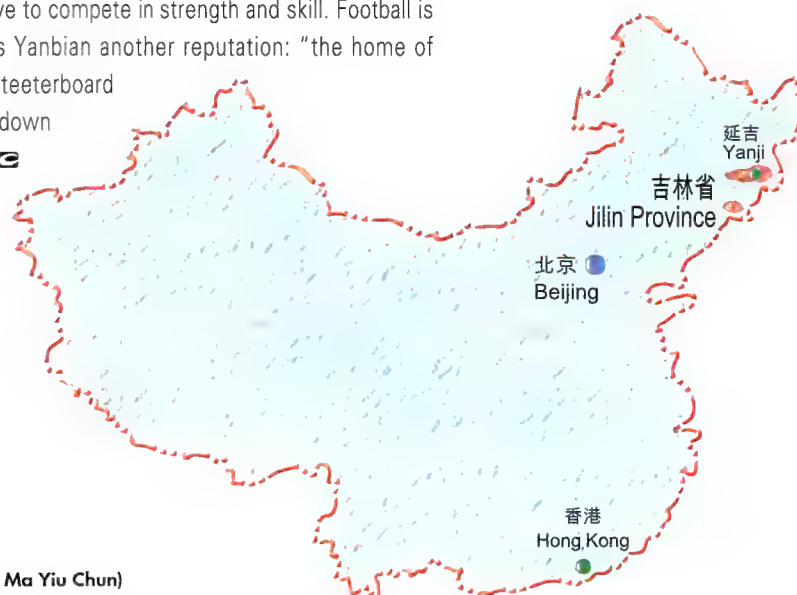
mourning suits during this period. The date of burial had to be an odd-numbered day. The deceased was clad in completely new clothes while the old clothes were all burned at burial. The Korean tomb is usually on the sunny side of a hill slope with the head of the deceased towards the higher side. Sacrificial offerings are placed in front of the tomb, and relatives have to come to the tomb for three days to offer sacrifices. After that, the sacrificial ritual has to be repeated on the days of birth and death of the deceased, the Clear and Bright Festival, the fifth day of the fifth lunar month (the Dragon Boat Festival for the Han Chinese) and the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Recreational activities

The Koreans are good singers and dancers and Yanbian is known as "the home of singing and dancing". During festivals, the ancient melodious tunes are played on a stringed instrument and a flute. Usually, when someone leads the singing or beats the long drum, the rest of the people, men and women, old and young, would all join in the dancing. Typical dances include the Fan Dance, Joyful Farmers' Dance and Water-jar Dance which were created by the dance-loving farmers themselves. Besides, the Long-Drum Dance and Crane Dance are also characteristic of Korean dancing.

Wrestling is an ancient sport for Koreans in which men love to compete in strength and skill. Football is the most popular sport for Korean young men, and it gives Yanbian another reputation: "the home of football". Women, on the other hand, seek pleasure on the teeterboard and swings. The young girls in white skirts swinging up and down are just like flying white cranes, truly a feast for the eye.

Translated by F. Huang



1. An old Korean lady (by Wang Miao)
2. Korean women in Tumen City carrying things on their heads (by Ma Yiu Chun)
3. Mother and daughter of the Korean ethnic group (by Chan Yat Nin)
4. The inside of a typical Korean house (by Chan Yat Nin)

CITY PROFILE

Xiamen:

A Beautiful Port City

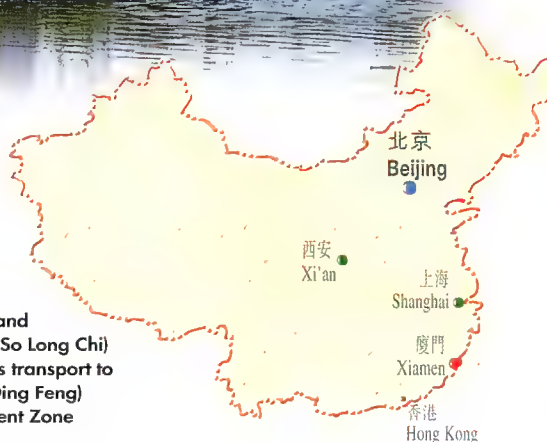
by the Taiwan Strait

Photos by Xie Guanghui and So Long Chi
Article by Gloria Shang



Xiamen has everything to call itself a favourite tourist destination – bright sunshine, all-year-round warm climate and luxuriant vegetation, beautiful beaches, luscious food, and rich cultural relics. But the most special thing about Xiamen is its geographic location. Situated by the Taiwan Strait, it is a city favoured by people on both sides of the sea.

1. A new landmark of Xiamen
2. Continental-style residences on Gulangyu Isle (by Chan Yat Nin)
3. Xiamen has a comprehensive air, land and sea transportation system. (by So Long Chi)
4. The cross-sea Xiamen Bridge makes transport to and from Xiamen convenient. (by Ding Feng)
5. Newly built villas in Huli Development Zone (by Chan Yat Nin)



Xiamen is located at the mouth of the Jiulong (Nine-Dragon) River in East China's Fujian Province. Seated by the Taiwan Straits, it faces Taiwan and the Penghu Islands across the sea. The Gulangyu (Drumming Wave) Isle of Xiamen and the Greater and Lesser Datan isles of Taiwan are separated by only a narrow strip of water.

The city comprises Xiamen Island, Gulangyu (Drumming Wave) Isle, and its mainland area on the northern bank of the Jiulong River. With 1,516 square kilometres under its jurisdiction, Xiamen has a developed urban area of 58 square kilometres. Although more than 99 percent of Xiamen's 1.21 million population are Han people, there are also quite a few ethnic minority groups among its citizens, such as the Hui, Manchu, Zhuang, She, Miao and Gaoshan. Xiamen is also the home town of thousands of overseas Chinese. Many Taiwan people originated from Xiamen and, though separated by the sea, people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait still use the same local dialect of southern Fujian.

History Begins with Two Families

Xiamen Island used to be called Lu (Egret) Island because, once upon a time, it's main inhabitants were egrets. Written history of the city can be traced back 1,140 years to the Tianbao reign of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), when two families, the Xue and the Chen, moved in from southern and eastern Fujian to settle on the island.

In 1387, during the Ming Dynasty, the court began to build battlements and a walled city on the island, and renamed it "Xiamen", which literally means "Gate of the Motherland Building". It was set as a city of Fujian Province in 1933.

Chen Jiageng and Jimei University Town

Xiamen is a cultural city, too. Of its eight higher learning institutes, Jimei University and Xiamen University are the most representative.



Both of them are contributions of Mr. Chen Jiageng, a famous overseas Chinese.

Jimei University is situated in the northwest of Xiamen Island. The clusters of campus buildings in southern Fujian architecture have turned Jimei into a school town. Its founder, Mr. Chen Jiageng, was a native of Jimei who emigrated to Singapore and made a fortune in the rubber industry. From 1913 to 1920, he founded a series of schools specialising in various areas, including teaching, marine products, navigation, agriculture and forestry, Chinese, and commerce, which merged to form today's Jimei University. In addition, Chen founded a primary school and a middle school to make the school town complete. Again, in 1921, he made another generous donation to build Xiamen University. Mr. Chen Jiageng served as vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

and member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, and died in August of 1961 in Beijing.

Drumming Wave Isle – a Concert Hall in Paradise

Drumming Wave Isle is the pride of Xiamen. This small island of 1.78 square kilometres demonstrates the best of Xiamen, and the locals insist that without going to Gulangyu one cannot be considered as having set foot in Xiamen.

The isle, as green as a gem, is actually a garden on the sea. There is no automobile, no environment-destructive factory. Walking along its quiet lanes, or playing with the waves on the charming beaches, or admiring the spectacular rocks of various sizes and shapes scattered in the sea, one feels as if one is living in Paradise.

Besides its picturesque natural scenery, Drumming Wave Isle is also famous for being the home town of many established musicians. Its per-capita piano ownership is the highest in the nation, hence the nickname Isle of Pianos, or Cradle of Musicians. A group of tourist spots related to music, and a concert hall, have been built so that music lovers can think of music, enjoy music and dream of music on the paradisaical island.





increased 20.8 percent annually. In 1996, the city's GDP reached 30 billion yuan.

The city government has been working painstakingly to improve Xiamen's infrastructure and environment so as to maintain its natural beauty while tackling the economy. Xiamen is now the 10th most economically powerful city in China and it will further develop itself into a more prosperous and more beautiful port city.

1. A painting class in the Children's Palace (by Xie Guanghui)
2. Western fast-food restaurants are popular among young people. (by Chan Yat Nin)
3. A fashion shop (by Xie Guanghui)
4. Outside a restaurant (by So Long Chi)
5. A new store has just opened. (by Xie Guanghui)
6. Kai Kou (Xiamen) Golf Course (by So Long Chi)
7. People living on the other side of the Taiwan Strait love to visit Xiamen (by Xie Guanghui)

Active Role in the International Community

Xiamen has a developed communication system including air, rail, road and sea, which links it widely with domestic and foreign cities. The port of Xiamen has business connections with over 60 port cities in more than 40 countries and regions. Passenger ships sail regularly between Xiamen and Hong Kong. In 1995, the port's freight turnout reached 13.14 million tons, including 310,000 standard containers.

With its advantageous location, Xiamen is the venue of numerous commercial meetings and exchanges. It is the sister city of several foreign cities, such as Cardiff of the United Kingdom, Sasebo of Japan, Cebu of the Philippines, Baltimore of the United States, Wellington of New Zealand and Penang of Malaysia.

An Emerging Free Trade Port

The policy of opening up has ushered the ancient coastal city into a new era. In 1980, the Xiamen Special Economic Zone was established, and was eventually expanded to include the entire Xiamen and Gulangyu islands, covering an area of 131 square kilometres. With numerous preferential policies granted by the Central Government, the city is designated to become a free trade port. Special areas for Taiwan investments have been founded in Xinglin, Haicang and Jimei, followed by a tax-free foreign trade zone. In addition, the Huli Industrial Area and the Xiamen Torch High-tech Development Area have also been constructed and opened to foreign-funded companies.

Up to the end of 1995, a total of US\$10.72 billion in contracted overseas funds had been absorbed, and the output value of the 2,382 foreign-funded companies had occupied 73.2 percent of the city's total industrial production and 37 percent of its foreign trade.

Geared up by overseas investments and flexible policies, Xiamen's economy has taken off. With industry as the mainstay, its agriculture and service industries have also developed coordinatively. During the period 1982-95, its GDP increased 21.7 percent each year, while the residents' average income



TOURING XIAMEN: BEACHES, ROCKS, GARDENS EVERYWHERE

Xiamen is rich in tourist resources. Even if one does not have a well planned itinerary, one can still have a nice time enjoying its endless beaches and numerous gardens. The city's main tourist spots are scattered in the five major tourist areas of Drumming Wave Isle, Southern Putuo, Wanshi, Jimei and Tong'an.

Drumming Wave Isle Tourist Area

This fairyland can be reached by ferry from Xiamen Island. One can stay a day on the isle, enjoying its scenic spots and cultural relics.

Riguang (Sunlight) Rock

Sunlight Rock stands 92.68 metres above sea level at the top of Longtou (Dragon Head) Hill situated at the centre of the isle, and is the highest spot on the island. From the vista pavilion one has a panoramic view of both Gulangyu and Xiamen. On the hill are a series of cultural sites, including the ruins of an ancient battlement, rock-face carvings, Lianhua (Lotus) Temple, stone caves and the memorial museum of Zheng Chenggong.

Haoyue (Bright Moon) Garden

The 20,000-square-metre park lies by the Lujiang River can be reached by a five-minute walk from the ferry. Built in August 1985, the garden, in Ming-dynasty style, is dedicated to Zheng Chenggong, a Ming-dynasty hero who drove the Dutch colonists out and recovered Taiwan. In 1661, General Zheng



defeated the Dutch after eight months of fierce battles and forced the Dutch governor to surrender on February 1, 1662. A 15.7-metre-high statue of General Zheng (the largest statue of a historical figure in China)

stands by the sea.

Bagualou Museum

The building's crimson dome is the landmark of Drumming Wave Isle. Built in 1907, the museum used to be a private mansion of Lin Heshou before it was made into a public museum displaying the history of Xiamen. Among its collections are jade, china and arms of various dynasties.

Subtropical Botanical Garden

Not far from Sunlight Rock lies the Subtropical Botanical Garden, which occupies an area of 13.4 hectares. The purpose of this garden is to transplant tropical and subtropical plants to China. Within the garden are various gardens and houses of different functions, such as exhibition greenhouses, growing greenhouses, transplanted seedling gardens, experimental nurseries, cool houses, etc.

Sailing Around the Isle

On a tourist yacht or rented motorboat, one can sail around the isle or visit some smaller isles.

Nanputuo Tourist Area

Located east of the old city of Xiamen, this area provides the traveller with many historical and cultural relics that reflect the tradition and customs of the local people.

Nanputuo Temple

This thousand-year-old Buddhist temple is famous nationwide. Situated not far from Xiamen University, the temple contains a series of magnificent halls and towers. Grand celebrations are held on the 19th days of the second, sixth and ninth months, the birthdays of the Goddess of Mercy. From the hill behind the temple one also has a panorama of Xiamen University and the port of Xiamen. There is also a Buddhist institute established in 1925. The temple can be reached by bus Nos. 1, 2 and 21.

Wulaofeng Mountain

Standing next to the port of Xiamen, the five peaks of the mountain look like five old men observing the sea – hence its name, meaning "Five Seniors".

Xiamen Overseas Chinese Museum

Situated at the foot of Mt. Fengchao (Beehive), the museum was founded in 1959 by Mr. Chen Jiageng. It displays the history and the present of overseas Chinese. Take bus Nos. 1, 2 or 21





and alight at the stop of the Museum.

Hulishan Battlement

Located on Hulishan Bay in southwestern Xiamen Island. On display are several dozen ancient cannons, both Western and Chinese, positioned on a battlement built in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Also on display are ancient swords, guns and strange rocks from all over the world.

Jingzhou Pleasant Park

Situated in the southeast of Xiamen Island, the park faces the sea. To reach there, take bus No. 1 from the Railway Station and change to bus No. 29 at Xiamen University, or take bus No. 2 from the Ferry and change to bus No. 29 at Daxicun.

Wanshi Mountain Tourist Area

This scenic area to the east of the city centre is characterised by subtropical plants and spectacular rocks.

Xiamen Yuanlin Botanical Garden

More than 20 specialized gardens for various plants have been built around Wanshi Mountain Reservoir, including the Rose Garden, Pine and Fir Garden, Herb Garden, Palm Garden, Hundred Flowers Garden and Orchid House. Many of its 3,000 varieties of plants are world-famous and rare species.

Tianjie Temple

Built during the early years of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1922), this temple used to be famous for ringing its bell 108 times every morning. Along the stairway leading up to the mountain, one can enjoy a series of scenic spots, such as "Asking the Immortal for the Way", "Stone Chessboard" and "Long Flute Cave". On the top of Camel Peak, one has a panorama of both Xiamen and Drumming Wave Isle.

Huxi (Tiger Creek) Rock

An ancient temple, first built in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and renovated repeatedly during later dynasties, nestles against the mountain. Most of its halls are built in caves. Major tourist spots include Tiger Teeth Cave, Night Moon Cave, Sandwiched Sky Trail and Flying Whale Stone.

Jimei and Xinglin Tourist Area

Scenic spots in Jimei are based on Jimei University, founded by Mr. Chen Jiageng. Other spots in the university town include the following:

Yanping Ancient Battlement

This is where Zheng Chenggong once guarded in the end of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). An old cannon, and the stone gate of the walled city, still exist.

Aoyuan Park

Also called Jiageng Park, Aoyuan Park is situated on a small isle in the sea east of Jimei. The park was rebuilt by Chen Jiageng on the ruins of a small temple. It is now the location of the founder's tomb, where the life of Chen Jiageng is illustrated in 15 vivid bas-reliefs.

Guilai (Home-Coming) Hall

This is the former residence of Mr. Chen Jiageng. The one-storey mansion, occupying 4,000 square metres, is distinctive with its white walls and green roof. A three-storey memorial museum has been built beside the mansion.

Xinglinwan Hot Springs Resort

This resort is built on an island situated in the middle of Xinglinwan Reservoir. The scenic reservoir and the hot springs make the small island an ideal resort.

Tong'an Tourist Area

Tong'an is an ancient town whose 1,700-year-old history has left it a rich cultural legacy.

Around the county seat, the traveller can see numerous historical buildings and relics.



Fantian Temple

Located at the foot of the main peak of Tianlun Mountain, this ancient temple was first built in 581 during the Sui Dynasty, and has been renovated repeatedly with donations from Chinese and foreign Buddhists. Several of its halls and towers have been restored to their original appearance over the past few years. The square, three-storey Brahmana Pagoda at the temple was built during the Song Dynasty.

Tong'an Confucian Temple

Located on the western bank of the Dongxi River, this temple was first built during the Five Dynasties (907-960). It has been turned into a county museum with a wide collection of relics since the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D.24).

Song-dynasty Kiln

Ten kilometres from the county seat, on the left bank of Dingxi Reservoir, lies the ruins of a Song-dynasty kiln. It is recorded that porcelains produced here were exported to Japan.

The Three Dadeng Isles

Called Dadeng, Xiaodeng and Jiaoyu respectively, the three isles are only 1,000 metres away from Taiwan's Jinmen Island. Spending a couple of days on these fishing islands, one can learn about the life of fishermen and enjoy the quiet, peaceful beauty of nature.



FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Transport

Xiamen can be easily reached by air, land and sea. Its Gaoqi International Airport is 12 kilometres from the city centre. The 26 air companies operating here have opened 54 domestic and international airlines, providing 320 flights to and from Xiamen each week. Two passenger ships sail between Xiamen and Hong Kong regularly.

Hotels

Xiamen has clusters of hotels in different categories.

Xiamen Mandarin: Tel: (592) 602 3333 Fax: (592) 602 1431

Add: Luli District, Xiamen

Hong Kong Office: Tel.: 2838 8760 Fax: 2834 1054

Xiamen Hotel: Tel: (592) 202 2265 Fax: (592) 202 1756

Add: 16 Huyuan Road, Xiamen Postcode: 361003

Egret Hotel: Tel: (592) 202 5201 202 5212 Fax: (592) 202 5721

Add: 6 Huyuan Road, Xiamen Postcode: 361003

Xiamen Aviation Hotel: Tel: (592) 513 4888 Fax: (592) 513 3774

Add: 5 Lianhua Road (S), Xiamen Postcode: 361009

Huadu Hotel: Tel: (592) 203 8920 202 6861 Fax: (592) 211 7417

Add: 819 Xiahe Road, Xiamen Postcode: 361004

Xinyou Hotel: Tel: (592) 513 6677 513 2352 Fax: (592) 513 2361

Add: 16 Lianhua Road (S), Xiamen Postcode: 361009

Xiamen Plaza: Tel: (592) 505 8888 Fax: (592) 505 8899 505 8877

Add: 908 Xiahe Road

Holiday Inn Crown Plaza: Tel: (592) 202 3333 Fax: (592) 203 6666

Add: 12-8 Zhenhai Road, Xiamen

Gulangyu Guesthouse: (595) 206 6050

Add: 25 Huangyan Road, Gulangyu Isle, Xiamen

Xiamen Gulang Hotel: Tel: (595) 206 3280 - 3102 Fax: (592) 206 0165

Add: 14 Gusheng Road, Gulangyu Isle, Xiamen Postcode: 361002

Specialities:

Fried Oysters: Made of a special species of small oyster caught in Xiamen, eaten with spicy dressing.

Thread Noodles: As thin as thread, the noodles are supposed to be well boiled. Eat with seafood.

Fried Five Flavours: Mixed lean pork with green onion, fish, duck egg, starch, chestnut, sugar, soysauce and five-flavour powder, wrapped in beancurd skin and fried; eaten with hot red pepper sauce.



1. The ancient Southern Putuo Temple (by So Longchi)
2. The main building of Jimei Middle School is a blend of Chinese and Western architecture. (by So Long Chi)
3. Jimei University founded by Chen Jiageng, a famous overseas Chinese (by Chan Yat Nin)
4. Detail of a Fujian-style architecture in Aoyuan Garden (by So Long Chi)



Snacks: Dongfen duck, crab and glutinous rice porridge, glutinous dumpling soup, fried dates, thin cakes, sandwiched sweet cakes, etc.

Restaurants:

Haoqingxiang Restaurant: Famous for local delicacies and snacks.
Add: 32-34 Dayuan Road, Xiamen Tel: 205 8128

Nanputuo Temple Restaurant: Specializing in vegetarian food.
Located in the temple. Tel: 208 5908

Chaogang Restaurant: Famous for Chaozhou and Hong Kong cuisine. Add: Ground Floor Jianye Building, Hubin Road (N) Tel: 505 8688

Xinguang Restaurant: Good for Fujian, Taiwan, Chaozhou and Hong Kong cuisine, also a place to combine entertainment with dining. Add: Hubin Road (N) Tel: 505 5681

Xiamen also has numerous restaurants of different Chinese cooking schools such as Sichuan, Shandong, Shanghai, Northern Jiangsu, Beijing; and the cuisines of ethnic minorities (Dai, Hui, Mongolian). Western dishes are available in most hotels and Western fast-food such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's and Pizza Hut is very popular.

Shopping

Shopping in Xiamen may provide you a pleasant experience. Besides big shopping centres in the city centre, you can also find specialised shops, street stalls and night markets. The junction of Zhongshan Road and Siming Road (S) is the traditional shopping area, where modern shopping centres and department stores are concentrated. During weekends and holidays the streets are thronged with people. Longtou Road is the major commercial street on Drumming Wave Isle. Here you can find all kinds of art and handicraft works, including paintings, sculptures, porcelain, pearl embroidery, lacquerware, jade, etc. At Egret Shipping and Entertainment City, you can do your shopping, taste local delicacies, and watch folk performances.

Entertainment:

Xiamen culture is richly flavoured by southern Fujian folklore. The most typical is Gaojia Opera, a performing art popular among the locals. It's sung in southern Fujian dialect and usually depicts legendary and historical stories. Jinliansheng Gaojia Opera Troupe often gives performances in the city. Little Egret Folk Dance Troupe is a modern performing institute. Its actors and actresses are young and their performances progressive, and the troupe has won high acclaim from audiences both at home

and abroad. In addition, numerous movie houses and nightclubs also enrich Xiamen's night life.

Xiamen has two golf clubs, the Kai Kou (Xiamen) Golf Club and the Golf Country Club. The former is located on the Xiamen-Fuzhou Highway, 15 minutes' drive from Xiamen International Airport. It contains two 18-hole courses designed by the world-famous player Greg Norman. The second of these, occupying an area of 250 hectares, is situated on the border between Xinglin and Haicang. It is a comprehensive golf centre equipped with clubhouse, hotel, office building, apartments and villas.

You can also choose from many other entertainments, such as sailing, fishing or sipping tea in a southern Fujian teahouse.

Major Travel Agencies:

China Travel Service Xiamen:

Tel: (592) 202 5788 Fax: 302 1862

Add: 70-74 Xinhua Road, Xiamen

Postcode: 361003

China Youth Travel Service Xiamen Branch:

Tel: (592) 205 3188 Fax: 202 0024

Add: 65 Bailu Road, Xiamen

Xiamen Overseas Tourist Corporation:

Tel: (592) 211 3881 Fax: 202 8996 202 8994

Add: 45B Xinhua Road Postcode: 361003

Xiamen Tour & Travel General Co.:

Tel: (592) 201 5488 Fax: 202 0330 203 8424

Add: 15/F Jianhua Building, 78 Xinhua Road, Xiamen

Postcode: 361003

Climate:

Xiamen has a subtropical maritime climate. It is warm all year round, having neither hot summer nor cold winter, with an average temperature of 21°C. Its yearly precipitation is 1,100 mm. The city is hit by five or six typhoons a year, most of them between July and September.



1. Various aquatic products of Xiamen (by So Long Chi)
2. The statue of Zheng Chenggong stands on the southeast tip of Drumming Wave Isle. (by Chan Yat Nin)
3. Xiamen University (by So Long Chi)



Ecological Centre, Yangtse

An ecological protection centre was established recently in Keke Sheili near the source of the Yangtse River on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. It is the first non-government institute of its kind in China.

The centre will serve as a working and residential base for individuals and groups undertaking environmental protection projects and scientific research. It will also be used as an international academic exchange centre. It was jointly sponsored by over a dozen young volunteers. One of them, Yang Xin, donated the 200,000 yuan he made from his book about his experiences travelling along the Yangtse River.

Keke Sheili, located at the juncture of Qinghai, Xinjiang and Tibet, lies at an elevation of more than 5,000 metres above sea level. The area, a very pristine ecological environment, is home to a large number of rare animals and plants, and has abundant mineral resources.

Governor's House to Become Museum, Hong Kong

The HKSAR Government is considering converting part of Government House into a museum. The regional government is examining various options regarding the long-term use of the house. Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa has decided not to move into the house, and at present, it is being used by the chief executive for official functions.

Space Park, Guangzhou

A space-flight park, funded by Chinese farmers, opened in Guangzhou. The US\$32.5 million park, named Tianhe Space Flight Spectacle, was built to teach young people about outer space. In the park are more than a dozen exhibition halls. Visitors can see a film featuring rocket launching, or experience the simulated feeling of landing on the moon.

Shaanxi Boosts Tourism

Shaanxi Province, home of the world-renowned terra-cotta warriors and horses and many other cultural relics, has worked out a plan to improve its tourist facilities and infrastructure during 1996-2000, so as to further promote its booming tourism. Included in the US\$301 million plan are 38 projects, such as a museum of terra-cotta warriors and horses of the Qin Dynasty, pre-excavation work of the Qianling Mausoleum, the second-phase renovation of the Tang-dynasty Famen Temple, renovation of the Huangdi Mausoleum, etc.

Shaanxi has played an important role in China's 5,000-year-old civilisation. Thirteen dynasties established their capitals there, leaving 72 large mausoleums of emperors, many of which remaining intact. The province received 207,859 overseas tourists during the first half of 1997. It is hoped that the number will increase 8 percent annually over the coming few years.

The Three Gorges and Shipping

Navigation along the Yangtse River will be improved after the Three Gorges hydropower project is completed. Annual navigation capacity from Wuhan to Chongqing, a 1,300-kilometre stretch of river, will increase from the current 10 million tons to 50 million tons, according to authorities of the project. Meanwhile, total transportation costs along this section of the Yangtse will reduce 35-37 percent because the hard-to-travel part will be flooded with the water rising to 175 metres and the upper section becoming wider and deeper.

However, the undergoing project will limit the Yangtse River's navigation capacity, and the hard time will last till the Three Gorges Dam takes shape in 2003.

New Boeing for Shanghai and East China Airlines

China Shanghai Airlines will become the first airline company in China to operate the next-generation 737. The new Shanghai Airlines 737-700, which will be delivered in spring, will be configured in a two-class layout with eight first-class seats and 124 economy seats.

Meanwhile, China Eastern Airlines, also based in Shanghai, has received two Boeing MD-90 jets, which are configured to accommodate 157 passengers in a two-class arrangement. The new airplanes are targeted for use in one of the most heavily travelled regions of China — Anhui, where China Eastern has a well-established customer base.

LHOKE AND HIS SONS

Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong

Travelling on the plateau in western Sichuan, I found everything I saw worth recalling.

One morning, I climbed up a mountain slope to take a photo of the sunrise. After that, I walked upstream along a small river. In the warm sunshine, the poplar trees and houses on the mountain slope looked especially eye-catching, and the triangles formed of various coloured scripture banners on the mountains in the distance gave an air of remote mystery. It was said that these were the graveyards of the Tibetan people. The autumn wind was blowing, and the scripture banners were fluttering in mid-air. People became jubilant as long-pent-up feelings arose in their hearts — such is the western part of Sichuan!

A large Mani mound appeared in the distance. In the shape of a Buddhist pagoda, the mound was exquisitely built with stone slabs and Mani stones. From time to time, Tibetan people came on horseback from afar to walk around the Mani mound.

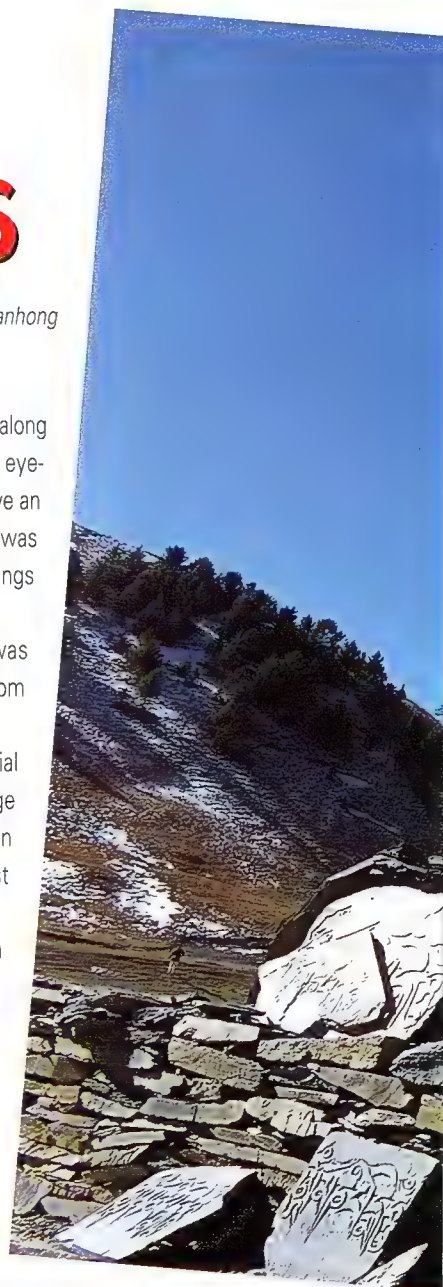
Mani mounds are seen everywhere in the areas inhabited by the Tibetans. These are simple sacrificial altars constructed of stones and animal bones at places that are believed to give people blessing. The large Mani mound we saw was marvelously built. In particular, the Mani stones were carved in intaglio or in relief in fluid lines and strange shapes, depicting events in the scriptures, guardian spirits, monsters, Buddhist temples, and even images from daily life, such as cats and dogs.

Close to the Mani mound was a simply-constructed log cabin. Living in the cabin was Lhoke, a Tibetan stone engraver. About 50 years old, he was a very kind man. When he saw me, he stopped the work at hand and asked me to go in and sit down. When I walked towards the cabin, the sound of chiselling was still heard from outside. It came from the old man's eldest son, Baima Daince, who was also an engraver. Lhoke told me that his eldest son had been learning engraving from him for more than two years. In the areas inhabited by Tibetans, stone engravers like Lhoke are called *duoga*. In fact, they are also ordinary farmers or herdsman.

The log cabin had no windows. Its roof was made of a piece of transparent plastic, through which the sunlight poured. The floor was covered by a layer of wheat straw, on top of which was a rug. This also served as "bed" and I was asked to sit on it as there was no chair or stool in the cabin. Lhoke handed me a bowl of buttered tea before I began to chat with him.

Lhoke's family had seven members, and his home was not far away. Making a living as herders, his family had 50 yaks and 10 horses, and was quite well-to-do. During our conversation, Lhoke's youngest son came in. He was called Zhaxi Cering, 13 years old, and still studying in primary school. When he had time, he came to this "home" after school. Just as I guessed, it was for the sake of the large Mani mound that Lhoke and his sons had built the little log cabin two years ago.

"Your father and elder brother are carving slabstones, what do you come here for?" I asked the young boy Zhaxi Cering. He just smiled at me by way of answer. Afraid that I might take too much of their time, I urged Lhoke to continue his chiselling, while I took out my camera to take photos of him. His skillful work told me that he was an outstanding *duoga*. What amazed me most was that he did the engraving at one go without drawing any sketch or





looking at any sample.

When I asked them to go to stand by the large Mani mound for a photo, old Lhoke became happy beyond words. He immediately asked his eldest son to come into the log cabin to change into his best clothes and sling a sword and a gun over his shoulder so as to make him look more militant. Coincidentally, they had just finished engraving a Mani stone. So Lhoke and his eldest son set up a long ladder, and the young boy Zhaxi Cering climbed up the ladder and put the engraved Mani stone at a high place.



Translated by Xiong Zhenru



1. Lhoke has a photo taken in front of the Mani mound wearing a Tibetan robe.
2. The painted Buddha has a lively expression.
3. Sacrificial altars built with stone slabs and animal bones
4. Lhoke's two sons
5. Stone carvings in fluid intaglio

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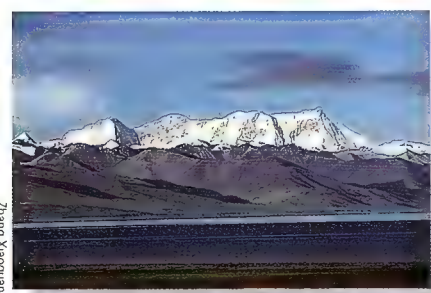


Lu Jinxiong

you to the **Three Gorges** where China's longest river has been dammed and the world's

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Zhang Xiaochuan

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